ENTERTAINMENT / D4

It's so over: Gretchen and Tonyboy Cojuangco; she has new project

MOTORING / B2-4

For Metro Manila drivers: 10 road hazards to look out for

WORLD / A24

Kennedys—Ted and Caroline—endorse Obama for US presidency

American lawyer fined, wife jailed for treating Filipino maid like a dog

LOS ANGELES—A FORMER TOP HOLLywood studio lawyer and his wife were sentenced for abusive treatment of their Filipino maid to a state Federal prison sentence said "unsanitary to modern day slavery."

US District Judge Dale Fischer ordered James Jackson, 53, a former vice president of legal affairs at Sony Pictures, to perform 200 hours of community service and to pay a $5,000 fine (P245,000) for admitting a charge of alien harboring.

Jackson's wife Elizabeth, 54, was given a three-year jail term after she pleaded guilty to a charge of forced labor.

After 'curly hair,' PNP hunts 'PLDT' lineman

By Alexis Pepa and Christine C. Avendaño

MDN A NET HAS BEEN cast for a supposed employee of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT).

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, January 30, 2008 44 18 sections | Vol. 22 / No. 32 P18

New ZTE witness backs off probe

Cayetano: He knows everything about deal

By Julito Lubog Jocellanes

HE HAS A MORE INTIMATE knowledge of the contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project that was awarded to China's ZTE Corp. than those who have already given riveting details of the scandal, including how much in bribes went to powerful officials for every signature obtained for the project.

Senator Rodolfo Biazol Lozada Jr. knew about the $329-million ZTE deal from Day One, he was told to have been "bullied" by President Maragtapat Arroyo's husband, who was also linked in the allegedly tampered project, according to several officials and Lozada's close associates who the business talked to.

In a golf club in Metro Manila, Lozada was allegedly spat at by the President's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, said close sources.

Sen. Alan Cayetano, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee investigating the scandal jointly with two other committees, confirmed that Lozada knows how the entire ZTE deal was put together.

"He will be able to put together the circumstances of the deal.

SHOWDOWN SHOWTIME Which one will the front of power be the Presidency? Speaker Jose de Venecia or Rep. Prospero Pichay? Both their camps claim they have the numbers, and counting.

Mike A accused of plotting to oust JDV

By Julito Lubog Jocellanes and Norman Bordadora

THE SON AND NAMESAKE OF Speaker Jose de Venecia yesterday said President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, was behind the move to oust his father from the speakership.

"I'm asking the First Gentleman and his friends to stop attacking my father," businessman Jose "Joey" de Venecia III told the business on the phone.

"They are targeting my father because they are saying that my father cannot stop me," he said.

US backed Suharto despite rights abuses

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States on Monday declassified documents detailing how Washington propped up ex-Indonesian dictator Suharto, who died at the weekend, at the expense of democracy and human rights.

The documents, declassified following requests under a Freedom of Information law, showed the US administration did not use its leverage to bring Suharto to account during his 32-year reign until his last months in office. (See related story in The World, Page A24.)

During his rule, Suharto illegally amassed billion of dollar in state funds. (See table above and story on Page A13.)

"One thing that is clear from the tens of thousands of pages which are just declassified now is that the US—for whatever reason—from 1966 to 1998—at no time ever did US presidents ever exercise their maximum leverage over his regime to press for his

Cop killed fighting 50 NPA rebels

By Tetman Lim
Inquirer Mindanao

TAGUM CITY—A POLICE OFFICER was killed Sunday by a band of rebels in Maharlika, Compostela Valley, yesterday but died in the fighting, police said.

"We lost gallant hand, the rebels were not able to get away a single firearm," Supt. Roland dela Rosa, provincial police director, said of the fierce clash between the rebels and the police.

Another officer, SPO1 Allan Sandig, was killed a few hours later when New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas ambushed a police contingent in Compostela town.

Suarez's pregnant wife and another unidentified civilian were wounded in the crossfire, Dela Rosa said.

Suarez was in his house in Purok 15, Barangay Bukal, Salvacion, when the rebels arrived at around 5 a.m. The

Bush asks US Congress to pass $150-B package

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT George W. Bush, sounding before Congress one last time, urged Americans to stand confident against gathering economic forces and to be patient with the grinding war in Iraq.

Bush delivered his final State of the Union address on Monday night (Tuesday morning in Manila) before a hostile, Democratic-led Congress eager for the end of his term next January.

With his approval rating near

JOBLESS US The jobless, the underemployed as well as those who seek a career shift are expected to flock to the happening "Career Expo 2008" on its opening today at Trinoma Activity Center on North Avenue in Quezon City. The job fair ends tomorrow.

No Lazarus: Man who came back to life dies

By Tonette Orejas
in Central Luzon
and Beverly T. Mendoza
in Manila

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—He died and came back to life. But after three hours, he died again.

According to Ribato and Filomena Tapale, this happened to their 39-year-old cancer-stricken son Alfredo, in a span of four hours, which included a brief encounter with healing priest Fr. Fernando Suarez.

IT'S ALL THE RAGE Walk for a cause to call attention to one's advocacy, which is what sugar plantation workers from different parts of Negros Occidental marching on the provincial capitol, Bacolod, hope to happen. They cause The extension of the 23-year-old Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program which ends in June.

Ex-mayor on trial for murder gunned down in Manila City Hall

By Tina G. Santos

A POLITICAL CRIMES LONG splattered with blood sealed yesterday outside a Manila courtroom in a blaze of gunfire.

Wearing a light blue, collared shirt emblazoned with the word "POLICE" at the back, a lone gunman shot dead former Mayor Bay Bay Pap of Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental, while the latter was waiting in the fourth floor corridor of Manila City Hall for the start of his murder trial, police said.

Two other people—including Pap's bodyguard and a woman—were wounded in the 9 a.m. attack that sparked a stampede among City Hall employees, police said.

The gunman, who was armed with a .45-cal. pistol, escaped to the confusion.

Pap died after sustaining four gunshot wounds in the chest and a fifth one to the nape.

The 65-year-old Pap, belonged to a clan that had been at the center of political violence in Misamis Occidental. He was the sixth member of his family to be killed—three of the previous killings were linked to politics.

Pap himself had once been convicted of murder but the verdict was reversed on appeal.

Police said they were looking into possible security lapses that might have enabled the assassin to slip in and out of City Hall without being detected.

"It was a clear political vendetta," Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim said, when asked what

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN ₱4,539,092.40

Kiko out as LP chairman

Drilon takes over as Roxas-Pangilinan rift worsens

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE LIBERAL PARTY YESTERDAY named former Sen. Franklin Drilon as the new chair of the party in a major leadership shakeup that has further fueled speculations that all's not well at the top of one of the country's oldest political parties.

Drilon will replace Senate Majority Leader Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan who has been LP chair since March 2006 when Vice President Noli de Castro left as brake away from the party to form a new wing.

But there were conflicting reports on the change in the party's top leadership.

Pangilinan said yesterday that he stepped down as party chair because he did not agree with the decision of LP president Sen. Manuel Roxas II to align the party with the Estrada-led opposition.

Differences in opinion

"I don't want to swamp his style. We have differences in opinions, in political views," he said.

He said he tendered his resignation as an LP chair last Sept. 21 to give Roxas a free hand to support party officials upon his election as party president on Nov. 26.

But another report said it was Roxas who ejected Pangilinan from the party.

Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III said that party member had given Senate "blanket authority" to appointing and removing officers of the party as he pleased when he was elected LP president last November.

Roxas announced yesterday the leadership shakeup in the party.

Aside from Drilon, Roxas named Cavite Rep. Joseph Alvarez as secretary general; Aquino as Executive Vice President; and former Education Assistant Secretary for Legal Affairs Bong Montesa as Director General.

Tell it well?

In a phone interview, Roxas maintained that all was well between him and Pangilinan and that he would soon appoint the latter to another key post in the party which he revealed announcer as a keen skier.

Pangilinan, however, is not inclined to accept any party post.

According to Pangilinan, he was asked by Roxas a few months back if he had any preference in opinion or role in the party. "But considering we had our differences in views and political positions, one of deliberation I declined to hold any executive post," he said.

"They asked me what role I wanted to play. I said I'd just rather be a member of the National Executive Council (NEC)[00:00]. I will not accept any position," he said.

The feud between Roxas and Pangilinan surfaced early this year when Pangilinan insisted that Roxas should go through a selection process before the latter can proclaim himself as the party's presidential standard bearer. With a report by Breezy T. Hatchelad

Pia, Jamby in verbal tussle

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

IT WASN'T EXACTLY A CAT fight but Senators Pia Cayetano and Jamby Madrigal got into a tiff yesterday over the way a Senate hearing was being conducted.

Madrigal walked out in the middle of the hearing of the committee on the environment being presided over by Cayetano, to chair.

But minutes later, Cayetano objected to Madrigal's walkout.

The committee was deliberating 10 bills, all seeking the declaration of certain threatened ecosystems as protected areas.

"Maybe she was not interested in asking questions. I didn't notice that she was not there anymore. No problem with me," Cayetano told reporters who asked her later about Madrigal's walkout.

Madrigal accused Cayetano of railroading the 20 "protected zone" bills through the committee by cutting short the time allotted for the hearing.

When Madrigal's statements reached her, Cayetano told reporters: "She can call me names but, I'm sorry, I will do my work.

GMA not happy with budget cut

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL Arroyo is displeased with the cuts in defense spending and other realignments in the 2008 budget approved by Congress that other night but may not push through with her veto, a budget secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said yesterday.

In a press briefing, Andaya said President Arroyo, who's running for the U.N. Security Council, wants the P1.354-trillion budget bill to be sent to her for signing into law, but was cautious even as and only on the measured budget of 2009 for "smaller spending," or align it and employ a "well-honed spending."

Mr. Arroyo favors the latter, said the budget chief.

"When it comes to budgeting, the President has many options in her command. When you veto something, it's gone. You can't do anything about it. If we veto the whole budget, what will we spend?" he said.

But the President can employ "well-honed spending" by choosing funds which fall within the budgetary ceiling set by the Palace.

Line veto

She could, to effect, "veto" some items in the final version of the budget bill without even vetoing the whole budget, he said.

Since he had yet to see the ratified version, Andaya said the initial position on veto some congressional insertions "will stand" because "it's all about fiscal discipline."

But he said "We have communicated to Congress that we agree and we also some of certain insertions. However, the implementation will be dependent on the revenue performance of 2008," he added.

Reacting to Malacañang's reported displeasure over budget cuts, the chair of the House committee on appropriations declined to, saying the P10.5-billion contemplated cut on debt servicing and slow-moving projects represents some "completely justified" because of the appreciation of the peso.

House budget panel chair Edcel Lagman said he was ready to meet with Palace officials to iron out the issues.

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SC affirms Lucio Tan victory vs sequestration

By Leila B. Salaverria

TOBACCO MAGNATE LUCIO TAN'S VICTORY against the government attempt to take Tan's assets is final, complete and executory.

The Supreme Court upheld its Dec. 7 decision finding no basis for the Presidential Commission on Good Government's assertion that Tan's and several other people's shares in Fortune Tobacco Corp., Allied Banking Corp., Fortune Tobacco and Shareholdings Inc.

In a resolution dated Jan. 22, the high court denied the motions for reconsideration by the PCGG and the Office of the Solicitor General seeking to overturn the ruling that the PCGG failed to show that it had evidence for the shares in the companies were ill-gotten before it issued the sequestration orders.

In the Dec. 7 decision, the high court upheld a 2006 Sandiganbayan decision modifying the writs of sequestration against the shares of stocks of Tan; Marivic Tanpinhian Cameron Blunt Tan; Florencio Sarmiento Jr.; Florencio Santos Jr.; Silvestre Santos; Allied Banking Corp.; Iris Holdings & Development Corp.; Virgo Holdings & Development Corp.; Jewel Holdings Inc.; Fortunex Forex Inc.; Shareholdings Inc.; and Fortune Tobacco Corp. in the four companies.

The shares were acquired in 1986 following the people power revolution that brought down the Marcos dictatorship.

The high tribunal said the PCGG failed to present evidence that the shares were ill-gotten and therefore belonged to the government. There was also no proof that Tan and the other respondents had taken advantage of their closeness with the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos to acquire the stocks, it said.

The high court said the sequestration orders should have been backed by prima facie evidence to allow the parties who were the subject of the writs the validity of the sequestration orders.

In its motion for reconsideration, the PCGG said it had presented 150 documents to back up the sequestration orders against the disputed assets. The PCGG also contended that the defense failed to contradict its evidence.

"The failure of respondents to rebut, explain or contradict these evidentiary facts bolsters the 'prima facie factual foundation' for sequestering the companies," the PCGG said.

The PCGG also argued that the landgrabbing cases filed to take into account the documents presented by former First Lady Imelda Marcos in another civil case. Imelda claimed that her husband, the dictator Marcos, was the beneficial owners of most of Tan's companies.

In her court filing, Imelda revealed the details of an elaborate 50-40 wealth sharing scheme between Marcos and Tan that said that 60 percent of the Tan holding company, Shareholdings Inc., was really owned by the Marcoses.

Tan, the country's richest individual with a fortune of $2.3 billion according to "Forbes" magazine, has repeatedly denied he was a Marcos crony and that he acquired control of several firms at preferential prices.

The PCGG said prima facie evidence referred to evidence that is "sufficient to raise a presumption of fact or establish the fact in question unless rebutted." Hence, uncontroverted evidence is sufficient to establish the facts, it added.

It said it was able to give the required quantum of evidence to justify the issuance of the sequestration orders.

Kidnapped priest 'happy to be back' after 5 months

By Beverly T. Malimban

THE ITALIAN MISSIONARY FR. GIANCARLO Bossi, who was rescued from kidnappers last July, is back after a five-month absence.

According to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' official website, Bossi arrived on Monday from Hong Kong for a meeting here with the missionaries of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), his religious order.

The priest is still eluding many from interviews and only told the CBCP news site that he was "happy to be back."

Bossi went to Italy following his release last July. Bossi was kidnapped from his Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay parish by a group believed to have close ties with the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang and was held for 46 days.

The Italian Embassy and the Philippine government have declined to report that a ransom was paid for his release.

Bossi said that although he hoped to go back to his old parish in Payao, "it may not be the case." He said he would wait for further instructions from his superior, Fr. Gianni Sandalo.

In Zamboanga City, Claretian priest Angel Calvo, a close friend of Bossi, said he had no idea if Bossi would be resuming his missionary work in Payao.

Sandalo earlier said Bossi, who left Italy on Jan. 23, was expected to go to southeastern Asia's country for a 15-day mission.

He said Bossi would eventually be conducting missions in the Philippines and might even be reassigned to Payao.

"But he will not be immediately deployed to his mission post after the sojourn as well as members of the [PIME] council will be able to come up with several opportunities," he said.

Authorities have repeatedly warned foreign missionaries to be very careful when they are on a mission in remote areas of Mindanao.

Last week, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police confirmed threats against Catholic priests, including bombing and assassination of the targets.

Two weeks ago, gunmen shot and killed Oblate priest Reynaldo Roda in Tabuan, Isabela.

"When a person comes back after a mission, before he resumes his assignments, he has to spend six to seven months in order to adjust to Filipino mentality and there are some time spent in different areas. After a couple of months, superiors and members of the council will offer him some possibilities and he will make his own final decision," Sandalo said.

He said if Bossi really wanted to return to Payao, then the PIME leadership would have to abide by that decision.

"Actually the Bishop [Julian Xeres] there has assigned a new priest in Payao but I will talk to him about the possibility of sending back Bossi," Sandalo said. Aelbe Alipalo, reporter of Mindanao

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 20 ISSUE, a timeline on Page A6—"Edsa Dos"—misdated three Public Works Secretary Gregorio Vigilar resigned from his Cabinet post on Jan. 14, 2001. Vigilar did not resign on that day. He stayed on until he was officially replaced in February 2001 by Simeon Datumanong.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 24 ISSUE, an article on Page A7—"CHR probes for possible killings"—misspelled the last name of a Commission on Human Rights investigator. The CHR investigator's name is Briccesio Salangsang—not Balilang—Jr.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 26 ISSUE, a front page story—"Palace split on new SC stand on Ebdl"—misstated the first name of the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice's name is Reynato—not Reynaldo—Puno.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 27 ISSUE, an article on Page A2—"Ebdl mission vexes Meiners release"—carried an erroneous paragraph. Talingdan was released from prison on Dec. 15. He went home to Zamboanga del Norte but was rearrested a week later by police. Former Brig. Romeo Jalaqui was not released from prison on Dec. 15. He escaped from prison on Dec. 22. President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered that he stay in prison until 2010. Jalaqui was rearrested a day—not a week—after he fled to Zamboanga del Norte.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors or writing to the Inquirer Readers' Representative, Atty. Sassa Bolipata-Quitain, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati-ave. Street, Makati City, fax 896-6214, e-mail address: sbolipata@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or omissions may be sent to comm.feedback@inquirer.com.ph or fax this 403-2417, 893-90, Atty. Rosalio Arboneda, his phone number is 403-3000 Local 343.

Enrile bares Philcomsat '40 thieves'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SEN. JUAN PONCE ENRILE YESTERDAY said that "40 thieves," including Cabinet officials, the chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government and leaders of government-owned companies led by Philcomsat Holdings Corp. of a total of P481.2 million over the past four years.

In a privilege speech, Enrile said the "40 thieves" defrauded the "telco cash cow but not sequestered corporation" through plunder, embezzlement and the jacking up of unnecessary amounts in the PHC's contracts including PCOS machines—officers and staff.

"The plunder came in the form of inordinate wasteful expenditures of directors and their cronies and payment for expensive lawsuits," he said.

PHC is one of a group of three companies with interlocking directorships, collectively known as the Philcomsat group. The two other companies are the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (Philcomsat) and the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC).

PHC is 90 percent owned by Philcomsat and holds three seats in the nine-member board of POTC, the shares of which were sequestered by the PCGG in 1986 on charges that these were part of the ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The government owns 35 percent of POTC through the PCGG and appoints directors to the group.

Two incidents are currently fighting over which is the legitimate board of PHC, which has been controlled since 2004 by the government-nominated group headed by Enrique Locsin.

Enrile, who is a shareholder of Philcomsat, said he objected to the upgrade of other subsidiary companies of Philcomsat who invested their savings and retirement funds in PHC only to see their hard-earned money ending up in the pockets of the "40 thieves."

SC issues no TRO on media petition

By Leila B. Salaverria

SO TEMPORARY restraining order has been issued yet in connection with the petition of media practitioners before the Supreme Court to stop the government from stifling their freedom to report by threatening them with arrest and criminal cases.

The high court made up the petition during its en banc session yesterday and resolved to direct the respondents in the their comment within 10 days, according to its spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez.

The respondents in the petition filed Monday include Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon, PNP National Capital Region Police Office Director Geary Barias and PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group head Chief Supt. Asher Ivinio.

Among those who filed the petition for prohibition and injunction were MBC-CBN's library and Corazon Soliman head Maria Sarena, Presbyterian Emilio Lantin and Inquirer columnists Conrado de Quiros, Sheila Coronel, David and Manuel Quezon III.

They sought to stop government officials from enforcing Gonzalez's advisory stating that members of the media could be arrested if they disobey authorities' directives during emergencies.

They also asked the high court to stop government agents from carrying out their warnings and threats of arrest or revocation of franchise, and from coming out with similar announcements in the future.

The journalists cited as said the officials should be stopped from stifling media practitioners and others or personnel of schools, from broadcasting them as combustible during military or police operations and from imposing any prior restraint on them.

Today, the high court also directed the government officials to comment on the petition of MBC-CBN officials for a writ of amparo and or prohibition to prevent their arrest.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 30, 2008
3rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 2 S 7: 4-17
Gospel: Mk 4: 1-20

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. And such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it on the lake while the crowd stood on the shore. He taught them many things through stories as parables is his teaching he said, 'Listen! The sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some of the seed fell along a path and the birds came and ate it up. Some of the seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up immediately because it had no depth. And when the sun rose and burned it, it withered because it had no roots. Other seed fell among thornbushes and the thorns grew and choked it, so it didn't produce any grain. But some seed fell on good soil, grew and increased and yielded grain; some produced thirty times as much, others sixty and others one hundred times as much.' And Jesus added, 'Listen then, if you have ears.'

When the crowd went away, some who were around him with the Twelve asked about the parables.

He answered them, "The mystery of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But for those outside, everything comes in parables, so that the more they see, they don't perceive, the more they hear, they don't understand, otherwise they would be converted and pardoned."

Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any of the parables?

What the sower is sowing is the word. Those along the path where the seed fell are people who hear the word, but as soon as they do, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Other people receive the word like rocky ground. As soon as they hear the word, they accept it with joy, but they have no roots so it lasts only a little while. So sooner does trouble or persecution come because of the word, they fall.

Others receive the seed as among thorns. After they hear the word, they are caught up in the worries of this life, false hopes of riches and other desires, and these come in and choke the word so that it produces nothing.

And there are others who receive the seed as good soil. They hear the word, take it to heart and produce, some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred times as much."

Commentary

Note that there is no middle ground in the parable of the seeds. Either the seeds find good ground and produce abundantly, or else they produce nothing. Either we take the Word of God to heart and bear fruit or else we hear in vain.

Asking the Word of God to heart means to ask listening for a message from the Bible and asking personal questions, "How does this apply to me?" Once that question is asked, a window of opportunity for God's grace is opened. The Word of God can start to penetrate the heart, and calls it to act. Once rooted in the good soil of the heart, it will bear much fruit. The Lord promise is nothing less.

SO THAT THE TRUTH WILL BE KNOWN ON THE ELECTORAL PROTEST OF SEN. LEGARDA vs. VP DE CASTRO

HER CLAIM vs. THE TRUTH

"The fake ERs from Congress constitute damning proof that this administration resorted to 'dagdag-bawas' (votes shaving/'vote-padding) in the 2004 presidential and vice presidential election." – Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste
(Manila Bulletin, March 11, 2006, p. 12)

Per Supreme Court Resolution dated January 18, 2008, PET Case No. 003:

"On the matter of the alleged spurious ER copies, we agree with the protestee (Vice President Noli de Castro) that the protestant (Sen. Loren Legarda) had not adequately and convincingly rebutted the presumption that as public documents, the Congress-retrieved ER copies, used for proclamation of the protestee by the National Board of Canvassers, are authentic and duly executed in the regular course of official business . . . . To overcome the presumption of regularity, there must be evidence that is clear, convincing and more than merely preponderant. Absent such convincing evidence, the presumption must be upheld. **In fact, the records show that even the witnesses presented by the protestant testified that they were able to discern security features and markings in the Congress-retrieved ERs.**" – Supreme Court

"Lest we forget, there had been persistent reports that last January and February (2005), operatives of the administration had sneaked inside Congress reportedly to tamper with the contents of the ballot boxes being kept there." – Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste
(Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 12, 2006, p. A6)

"As to the alleged break-in in Congress, which allegedly facilitated the switching of ERs, no conclusive evidence has been given. **One of the protestant's (Sen. Loren Legarda) own witnesses, Atty. Artemio Adasa, Deputy General for Legislative Operations of the House of Representatives, categorically denied that a break-in and a switching of ERs had occurred in Congress.**" – Supreme Court

"The retabulation of the election returns from the contested precincts in various parts of the country, particularly Cebu, will definitely prove there was widespread cheating and fraud in the last elections, thus altering the genuine results of the vice presidential elections." – Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste
(Philippine Daily Inquirer, February 22, 2006, p. A12)

"To say that the protestant (Sen. Loren Legarda) had shown enough evidence to prove that the whole or over half of the lead of the protestee (Vice President Noli de Castro) over the protestant is spurious, would go against the grain of the evidence on hand." – Supreme Court

Based on the Presidential Electoral Tribunal Reports on Revision of Ballots from the **Province of Cebu**, tabulation showed that the **668,518-vote lead of Vice President Noli de Castro was increased to 690,766, or an additional 2,220 votes**.

"I have put squarely behind this election protest my very limited resources so the Filipino people may take back what was stolen in the 2004 election." – Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste
(Manila Bulletin, March 16, 2006, p. 12)

"On May 3, 2007, the protestant (Sen. Loren Legarda) was required to deposit **P3,914,500 for expenses** necessary **for the continuation of the revision of ballots**. But **protestant failed to pay** on the due date . . . The Tribunal extended the period for protestant to make the necessary deposit. Even with this extension, she still failed to pay." – Supreme Court

"Based on the 2007 statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN), Sen. Loren Legarda is among the Top Ten Richest Senators in the Philippines, with a **net worth of P63.3 million** . . ."
(Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 17, 2007)

Based on the submitted report on election expenses of Sen. Legarda, she spent **at least P86 M during the 2007 Senatorial elections**.
(CENELEC Law Dept.)

"Though the recount has not yet reached halfway, I believe THAT at this point I have exposed the truth to the public – that Mr. De Castro's questionable hold on the vice presidency was truly propped by electoral fraud." – Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste
(Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 16, 2006, p. A7)

"The protestant (Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste) has been afforded ample opportunity to adduce evidence in her behalf for the First Aspect of the protest **but the evidence presented is simply insufficient** to convince the Tribunal to recalculate and overturn the **831,722 votes** that protestee **(Vice President Noli de Castro) had over her** in the last elections for Vice President." – Supreme Court

"Wherefore, the First Aspect of the protest is hereby **DISMISSED FOR LACK OF LEGAL AND FACTUAL BASIS**, as the pilot-tested revision of ballots or retabulation of the certificates of canvass would not affect the winning margin of the protestee (Vice President Noli de Castro) in the final canvass of the returns, in addition to the ground of abandonment or withdrawal by reason of protestant's (Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste) candidacy for, election to and assumption of the office of Senator of the Philippines. The Second Aspect, having been already **DISMISSED** on June 5, 2007, pursuant to Rule 33 of this Tribunal, the entire Protest is now deemed **DISMISSED** and **TERMINATED. SO ORDERED.**" (emphasis supplied)

– SUPREME COURT

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Counsel for Vice President Noli de Castro

Esperon breaking Yano in

By Nicole Pizo

WITH THREE months to go before he finally retires, Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon has started to train his successor, Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, in the job.

In a talk with reporters, Esperon said he was definitely stepping down at the end of his term sometime in May.

"Oh, yes (I'm stepping down). It has been a understood," he said.

He said it was unlikely President Macapagal-Arroyo would grant him another extension.

"Nothing has been said about that. General Yano has already been designated," Esperon said.

He said he and Yano had been talking about the turnover of command.

"I have asked him to meet with my joint staff every now and then as part of the transition," Esperon said.

Yano, he said, would make a fine chief of staff.

"He became brigade commander so he has had vast experience, so it's just a matter of time," he said.

Ready, but...

Esperon said Yano was actually ready to take over now, "but we have some arrangements to make."

Pilots asked what the "arrangements" were, Esperon said there were some things he needed to "tell" Yano. He was also unwilling to discuss "support systems," "future men" and changes in the staff, he said.

Esperon brushed aside the issue concerning some overzealous of the clergy that his term extension would lead to demoralization in the ranks.

"I most disagree with them. If the demoralization were a result of not being promoted, then they could be wrong in their presumption that our officers in the field are after promotions. The vast majority of our officers and men simply just do their jobs instead of thinking about promotions," he said.

Last week, President Arroyo extended Esperon's term to May 9, which would make him the longest serving military chief of staff in Southeast Asia.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, meanwhile, dismissed rumors of another destabilization attempt in February during the anniversary of the Edsa I people power revolt and the purported aborted power grab in 2006.

Bacarro said the military had not witnessed reports of unusual "movements" by soldiers or group critical of the government.

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Mike A accused of plotting to oust JDV

From page A1

referring to his blowing the whistle on the controversial $329-million National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp.

The latest allegations on the NBN-ZTE deal have purportedly soured relations between the President and the Speaker, with prominent talk of attempts by her allies in Congress to oust him.

The other day, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Mr. Arroyo had told her allies to stop the ouster move.

But according to an impeachment source who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the record, contradictory messages overflowed from Mike Arroyo to Antiterrorist regarding Erminta's statement, and were told that the ouster move would proceed.

Mike Arroyo accompanied the President on her official trip to Davos for the World Economic Forum.)

Jury de Venecia is scheduled to reappear at today's House inquiry to testify on the finding of a panel of experts, which he had requested, that the NBN-ZTE deal was overpriced by almost P8 billion.

He said his father had nothing to do with his aspirants on the deal and the alleged Embassy to rehash the bad-blood Mike Arroyo and then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos.

"I want Filipinos to know about the corruption, which is one of the reasons our foreign debts keep piling up," he said.

Gathering of forces

Despite Ms Arroyo's intervention, the camps of the Speaker and that of the presumed contender, House Rep. Prospero Pichay, appeared to be gathering their forces for a showdown.

The two men held court in separate hotels late on Monday.

De Venecia and members of the ruling Lakas-CMD, of which he is president, met at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Mandaluyong City, where Pichay and 66 Lakas members had signed a manifesto backing Ms Arroyo and the Speaker's continued leadership of the House.

Pichay said the show of support showed that Lakas was behind De Venecia.

Negroes, on the other hand, met with members of the Mindanao bloc at the Bambinelli hotel in Quezon City, where 38 congressmen from the South purportedly said they would back him run for the speakership if they had sufficient support.

There are 240 members of the House. A simple majority is all that is needed for a leadership change.

Kampi meeting

Reached last night, another House leader identified with the Negroes camp said those who wanted Dr. Velencia replaced were gaining in numbers.

He said Ms Arroyo's party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino, or Kampi, would meet today.

"That's a good 54 votes, and two might put 60 percent of them," said the source who asked not to be quoted. "Then there's the Mindanao bloc. That's 40 votes, and if we can get 50 percent of them, we already have almost 100 votes."

The source said the De Venecia camp appeared to be in panic mode. "They are they asking all of a sudden for resolutions to be signed left and right? Is he bothered by the reported growing support for leadership change?"

Andaveros if 66 showed up at De Venecia's meeting and only 30 were at the Mindanao session, the antiabalos score was far from reflective of the real score, the source said, adding:

The meeting called by the Speaker was for the whole Lakas nationwide. Those who were with [Negroes] were only from Mindanao."

Hot topic

Negroes' bid for the speakership was the hot topic of the Mindanao Legislators' Forum on Monday night.

"Mindanao congressmen will be united if the post is given to Mindanao. That is the word, and two might put 60 percent of them," said Negroes, a member of Lakas who was 3rd District's majority leader in the 13th Congress.

Two from the group—one belonging to the so-called rebels' bloc of the ruling coalition that supported Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia's failed bid for the speakership last August, and the other a member of the House minority—said the Mindanao lawmakers would back Negroes if the members showed a viable strategy to change.

If the majority of the congressmen believe that they want a new leader, the Mindanao lawmakers will support Negroes, said Zamboanga del Sur Rep. Antonio Cerilles.

But Cerilles said Negroes was not actually seeking the speakership.

"To be fair, he is not aspiring [for it]. He is just saying that if there is a call for a change in leadership, he's available," Cerilles said.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, a member of the opposition, said he did not agree with the idea of changing De Venecia at this time.

Rodriguez said he supported De Venecia's speakership because of the latter's position against Charter change and the effectiveness of the House leadership under his watch.

"However, if the majority decides to have another Speaker, I will support [my colleagues and] will also ask the ouster to support [him]," Rodriguez said.

He stressed that his support was "conditional" and would depend on the numbers.

Support downplayed

De Venecia's allies downplayed the Mindanao bloc's reported support for Negroes.

"There were Mindanao congressmen in the meeting with [the Speaker]," Dakila said, referring to Deputy Speaker Simeon Dalebuyan of Magindanao and Tawi-Tawi Rep. Nur Jaafar, among others.

"Some of them also were in the meeting of Mindanao congressmen, but only because they were members of the Mindanao caucus," Dakila said.

A House leader said there were discussions on the sidelines of the Lakas meeting about stripping Negroes of his leadership of the House panel on Commission on Appointments.

"Of course, those who want his position want him replaced," the House leader said.

But Dakila denied there was any such talk. "I believe all will be well," added [the Negroes and Negroes] talk." The said.

Ex-mayor on trial for murder gunned down in Manila City Hall

From page A1

night have been the motive for yesterday's killing. "Former Mayor Yap was facing murder charges filed by the family of his political opponent in his hometown."

Lim said there had been a previous attempt on Yap's life.

"He was also ambushed outside [Manila] City Hall but managed to survive," Lim said.

Manila Mayor's spokesman, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, said that a political vendetta was only one of the angles police were looking at.

"There had been a long history of violence between the Yaps and the Cabochos in political rivalry in Manaoag, Pangasinan province," Rosales said.

Bodyguard shot

Yap was standing outside Room 420—the aula of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 39 Judge Jesusita Dupaya—when he was gunned down.

Chief of the criminal, Peter Subijes, was described by police as one of Yap's six close-in security escorts. He was wounded in the body and remained in the committee area until of the Manila Doctors Hospital up to last night.

The other shooting victim was Bella Santos-Nicasio, a member of the Crusade Against Violence, who was about to attend a hearing in an adjacent courtroom. She suffered gunshot wounds in the left breast, left leg and right arm, according to her fellow CAV member Hermenia Mendoza.

She was taken to the Philippine General Hospital.

Gunmen on the run

"I saw the [gunman] running away while holding a gun with one hand and covering his face with the other," an investigator quoted Janice Velasquez, a 22-year-old shoeshine boy who was standing near the crime scene, as saying.

Senior Asst Officer Eduardo Garcia said he also saw the gunman running away but he could not give chase because he was guarding several detainees at the time.

Yap's bodyguards, as well as jail and police officers present during security exercises, failed to respond aggressively because firearms are not allowed in court, investigators said.

Empty elevator shaft

Terrified gripped City Hall as rumor spread that the gunman had run to an elevator. Members of the Special Weapons and Tactics team forcibly opened the elevator—but found it empty.

The MPD released an artist's sketch of the gunman based on the description provided by several witnesses.

He was described as between 20 and 30 years old, about 5'08 ft in weight and 5'8" to 5'9" in height, sporting dusty-red hair with a fair complexion.

Mayor Lim and Chief Supt. Rosales were investigating apparent security lapses.

Security clampdown

"There are police assigned in courts but these are roving policemen," Rosales said. "We'll try to find out how the gunman managed to smuggle a gun and if he was indeed wearing a police uniform as claimed by some witnesses."

"We're trying to determine where the lapse[s happened, and who could be held responsible."

Lim said the city government intended to beef up least three metal detectors and extend latest cameras to be installed at the main entrances.

He also ordered mandatory searches of all visitors for firearms and other deadly weapons.

Many entrances, exits

Lim, who promptly ordered the cancellation of business transactions at City Hall after the incident, conceded there might have been security lapses as the building had several entrances and exits.

He said the 10 in house security personnel were not enough to guard the premises considering the huge number of people who come in daily.

Bloody politics

Having dominated politics in the western Mindoro Occidental towns of Bulalacao and Sagnay (Mayor Yap was from Sagnay) for decades, the Yaps clashed with the Cabochos in the 1980s when they tried to expand their political clout in the nearby town of Rizal in Zamboanga del Norte.

In 1000, Yap and his brother Boy were found guilty by a Manila court of masterminding the 1992 assassination of Victorio "Boy" Cebuche, who was then mayor of Rizal, and were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Cebuche was shot and killed during a political rally. He and Boy Yap were contesting the Rizal mayoralty seat.

Cebuche's brother, Modesto, ran in his slain brother's place and won. But Perfecto was assassinated in Alabang in 2001, while the Yaps were already serving their life sentence.

In between the killing of the two Cebuches, a third brother was wounded in an ambush in Manila after attending the Supreme mass.

In March last year, Boy Yap was ordered released by the Court of Appeals after it reversed the lower court's ruling sentencing him to life imprisonment. The appellate court said the guilt of the accused had not been proven due to the conflicting accounts of the shooting.

5 other pending cases

Boy Yap had five other pending cases in other courts in Dumpites City and Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, the police said, who also facing a graft case in the Ombudsman.

Court employees said Yap's hearing yesterday was to commence with the killing of a certain Julio Dimalen, allegedly a rival supporter.

The Yaps' father, Bino, was killed in the 1980s by suspected Boy Cebuche's Army cohort. Their mother, Delia, a former mayor of the town and provincial board member of Mindoro Occidental, is a suspect in another murder and is still at large.

She was serving as mayor when the warrant for her arrest came out, forcing her to flee and abandon the municipality. She is believed to have left the country.

The family's political fortunes soon declined and the elections last year completed their political wipeout. With a report from Ryan B. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindoro

No Lazarus: Man, who came back to life, dies

From page A1

The Tapias couple said the first time Alberto died was when he slumped in his wheelchair as Suarez was giving his homily during the 10 o'clock healing Mass on Monday at the Lahuyan Shrine in Mexico, Pampanga.

Dr. Minda Theresa Velasquez said Alberto was already dead when medics from the Pampanga Disaster Coordinating Council brought him to the emergency room of the Mt. Carmel Medical Center here at 11:00 a.m.

"He was DOA [dead on arrival]," Velasquez, the attending physician, told the Inquirer.

"He had zero neuro-vital signs. No cardiac or respiratory activity at all," said Dr. Rogelio Magat, acting medical administrator-officer, citing medical records.

Dr. Alberto Suarez earlier said the heavens that after he whispered to Suarez that Alberto had died, the healing priest made the sign of the cross in the air in the direction of the man who was there, luring home on a stretcher.

Electric shocks

In the hospital emergency room, Velasquez said the doctors administered a series of electric shocks to Alberto's heart to make it start pumping. He later resumed beating shortly before noon, she said.

The family decided to take him home "against medical advice" said Velasquez. He was not brought back to the healing Mass, as reported yesterday by the Inquirer.

Velasquez said a male nurse accompanied Alberto home to the Bulacan resort he runs.

The bond for another three hours and died again at 3 p.m., his death certificate showed.

Extension, not a miracle

Although acquainted of the healing Mass, quick to announce that Alberto's revival was a result of Suarez's blessing from a distance, Atilano did not call his son's ban four hours a miracle.

"We got a short extension on life and left the world happy because he saw and heard Father Suarez," he said.

Alberto, an automotive mechanic who became a tailor so he could work in South Korea, left a 24-year-old son. His wife died of cancer of the pancreas two years ago.

Wales

At the wake yesterday, Roberto and Filomena told the Inquirer that their son died happy.

"Marunot po pagpanaw" (a peaceful death) is hope, Roberto na ng benefitsyar ng Father Suarez. At happy na. He had a happy death. His face was not sad. He heard the blessing of Father Suarez, and he received it," Filomena said.

Filomena said her son, who had colon cancer, was given six months to live. "He's had eight months. Hindi really wanted to die in the presence of Father Suarez," the swollen Alberto's sister in early January.

Alberto, the second child in a brood of 10, insisted on going to the Jan. 28 healing Mass because he had missed seeing or being touched by Suarez in Mexico, Pampanga City on the first four days of January.

He and brother-in-law Alex traveled by bus to Batangas but arrived late. "He was so sad he missed his chance," Alex said.

Happy death

Determined to hear the message of Suarez and be touched by him, Alberto asked his father to take him in the Lahuyan Shrine a day before the Jan. 28 event.

He joined the 4:00 a.m. and stept inside a van. Early the next day, he started queuing in the area reserved for wheelchair-bound patients, Rhetto said.

"During the Mass, Alberto smiled when he heard Father Suarez say that those who have doubted have an issue blessed by God," Rhetto continued.

A few minutes after that, Roberto saw his son slump in his wheelchair.

"Screaming Suarez exhibitionist is the Mass of the Knights National Collegian in Gregorio Araneta University Foundation, drawing some 8,000-odd people, according to Norma Cabrera of the Immaculate Conception Foundation, which organized the event.

Also in the Mass Gonzalo Lacuesta, the parish priest, gave his consent on the homilia. Ion is held the event.

His healing today

A picture in Malacañan, however, was not so welcoming.

The committee handling Suarez's schedule has decided to call off the session scheduled today in Sta. Rita, Bulacan, following the complaint of the parish priest.

Leandro "Dandoy" Gonzaga, one of the members of the core group organizing Suarez's healing activities, told the Inquirer that the committee would hold off all healing sessions in Bulacan "until the issue is resolved and the bishop [gives his approval]."

Suarez's healing activities are done in good faith, according to Gonzaga, but if the Malolos bishop disapproves, it might be best to hold off, he said.

Clarifying that Suarez's organizers do not violate canons for the healing Masses, the statement that the responsibility is the problems of protocol in the conduct of the healing sessions lie with the parish priests who invite Suarez or their communities.

Parish invites

"If the bishop is not informed then it is the fault of the parish priests who invited us[," Bishop said.

She explained that Suarez did not have a direct hand in his schedules and that various communities invite him to request for the healing Masses.

"Father Suarez, who heads the group handling Suarez's activities, just informs Suarez where to go, Gonzaga said. The organizing committee promises that the necessary permits in the dioceses have already been arranged.

Malolos Bishop Jose Oliveros, speaking at a press conference on Monday, questioned Suarez's healing activities that were conducted without permission from the bishops.

Oliveros said the Gregorian fete for the Doctors of the Birth, one of the congregations of the Roman Curia in the Vatican, instructs that Church ritual must not like a public healing and prayer sessions should be conducted with the explicit permission of bishops.

Oliveros said Suarez had conducted two healing sessions in his diocese without asking for his required permission for the services.

Belarmino said Suarez's group did not encounter any problem in other dioceses. She said they had conducted healing Masses in Davao, Cebu, Baguio, Batangas, Metro Manila and Rizal.

Cop killed fighting . . .

From page A1

rebels, Dela Rosa said, were military uniforms and insignia of themselves as Army soldiers assigned to Camp Rizalino in Davao City.

"They were asking for at least two members of the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO) who would supposedly serve as guides during their operation in the area," he said.

Password

The CVO is a paramilitary group involved in the government's counterinsurgency program.

But Suarez had sensed that something was amiss as he asked the accused men the military password, Dela Rosa said.

"The rebels failed to provide it and instead started shooting at Suarez," Dela Rosa said.

The officer, he said, sought cover and put up a fight before he was fatally hit.

The rebels were believed to belong to the NPA's Front 22 led by a certain Commander Ike.

Responding CVO members chased the fleeing rebels, but it was not clear whether there were casualties, Dela Rosa said.

In Compostela, another NPA group ambushed policemen on board dump trucks as they were returning to the town proper from a combat operation and a dialogue with residents in Barangay Panansalan.

Suzuki, a member of the 1102nd Police Mobile Group, was killed during the attack in Sitio Sipol in Barangay Bukal at around 10:30 a.m.

An unidentified civilian driver was wounded, Dela Rosa said.

GK to turn squatter area into 'high-class' resettlement

THE EMMANUEL RAMON (GK) FOUNDATION has pledged to help transform a squatter resettlement area in Bonifacio II, Cardiz, into the first "high class relocation site in the country," according to Vice President Noli de Castro.

De Castro, who is also chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, said DE Division Antonio Molina promised to tap the assistance of GK's partners in the business community to put the facilities of the relocation community in Tierra Martires court at par with leading subdivisions in Metro Manila.

Molina, reported De Castro, was impressed by the government's "humane approach" to resettlement, which includes a formal send-off of families by the mayor of their previous locale and their formal welcome by the mayor of the town where they are resettling.

"The practice restores the dignity of the resettled families," De Castro quoted Molina as saying.

De Castro said he was heartened by the GK's expression of support, saying this "brings the government-private sector partnership in the housing program to new heights."

The Tierra Martires site hosts some 4,000 families, mostly former residents of the Philippine National Railways (PNR) area in Tondo subject to the Dagdag.

The families had to be relocated to give way to the national railway improvement program. Cynthia Balana

Convicted ex-cops bewail court inaction on their appeal

By Jocelyn R. Uy

EX-POLICE CAPT. REYNALDO JAVLO AND two others convicted of homicide in the deaths of three alleged heroin dealers in 1990 are in limbo.

In a 16-page motion filed in the Sandiganbayan on Monday, their lawyer, former Justice Secretary Frank Chavez, said his clients could not seek relief from the Supreme Court since the Sandiganbayan has refused to act on the appeal they filed eight months ago seeking a reversal of their conviction.

The anti-graft court's First Division had found Javlo, PO2 William Veloso and patrolman Edgardo Castro and Antonio Halado Jr. guilty in the killing of Army Col. Rolando de Guzman, Maj. Ferdie Calaong and Aveliano Sapuntalanes, alleged heroin dealers, in a buy-bust operation in Makati City in 1990.

Except for Castro, who died before the promulgation of the verdict, the police officers were sentenced to prison terms of from six years and one day to 14 years and eight months and each was ordered to pay the heirs of their victims P50,000 in damages.

In May, Chavez filed a partial motion for reconsideration asking the Sandiganbayan to exercise its power to set aside the evidence indicated the police officers were only doing their duty during the buy-bust operation.

The lawyer argued the deaths occurred when the officers were met with armed resistance by the victims.

But the antigraft court resolved to by-pass the issue to take action on the motion, saying that the accused had lost the remedy once they failed to appear at the promulgation of the verdict, contrary to the rules of court.

A provision of the rules states that an accused loses the remedies available to him in a judgment he convicted if he fails to appear at the promulgation without justifiable cause.

Chavez, however, pointed out that on judgment day, the court itself had noted that Javlo had not been notified and his absence could not be used to deny him his right to seek remedies in the same court.

As for the other accused, Chavez is behind the court stating the promulgation that their whereabouts had not been determined in the last few years.

"Moreover, there is no definite basis finding that the absence of all accused were without justifiable cause," Chavez said.

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US backed Suharto despite rights abuses

From page A1

man rights or democratization," Read.

Simpson, who drove the Indonesian Indonesia and East Timor documentation project, said the only time Washington "decisively intervened" in Indonesia was in 1965, when it was looking from a financial meltdown amid unprecedented riots.

Bill Clinton, the Democratic US president at that time, pleased Suharto about half a dozen times, praising the Indonesian leader to adopt a stringent adjustment program demanded by the International Monetary Fund, according to the documents.

Suharto yields

Suharto adhered to the demands of the United States and the IMF.

"I think it is indicative of the kinds of pressure the US could bring to bear when it decides that it is in our interest to do so, but this was done on behalf of international financial institutions, never on behalf of human rights activists and the predemocracy movement in Indonesia," Simpson said.

The declassified documents include transcripts of Suharto's meetings with Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan, as well as Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

They also uncovered US perceptions of Suharto from the earliest years of his violent rule, including the 1969 annexation of West Papua, the 1975 invasion of East Timor, and the so-called "mysterious killings" of 1965-1966.

Steadfast ally

The United States was a steadfast ally of Suharto for much of his rule, providing him aid, weapons and diplomatic support as it regarded him as an effective bulwark against communism.

Suharto made his first visit as head of state to the United States in May 1970 amid rampant corruption and a major crackdown on political parties at home.

But at the White House meeting, Nixon told the Indonesian leader he was presiding over one of the "largest democratic countries in the world."

"There are no issues between the US and Indonesia," Kissinger wrote in Nixon approvingly, "and relations are excellent."

Talks with Ford, Reagan

In his talks with Ford at the White House five years later, Suharto brought up the question of Portuguese decolonization in East Timor and declared "the only way is to integrate the territory into Indonesia."

Ford gave no response, according to the documents.

There also was no mention of human rights in Indonesia in the briefing papers of Suharto's meeting with Reagan in October 1982.

Two years later, when then Vice President George H. W. Bush visited Jakarta on the heels of an alleged massacre of hundreds of civilians in East Timor and "mysterious killings" in Indonesia, the discussions centered largely on US ties with the Soviet Union and China.

580,000 killed

The US Embassy in Jakarta estimated that the government had summarily executed about 4,000 people at that time, documents showed.

Human rights abuses during Suharto's rule included a 1965-1966 crackdown on suspected communists and sympathizers estimated by historians to have killed at least half a million people.

Following Suharto's death Sunday, he was hailed by the US Embassy in Jakarta as a "historic figure" who "achieved remarkable economic development."

"Though there may be some controversy over his legacy," Suharto "left a lasting imprint on Indonesia and the region of Southeast Asia," the embassy statement read.

AFP

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The boy's father, Toru Kumon, was a mathematics teacher and he took uncommon action which led to a child-centered approach to learning considered revolutionary even 50 years later.

Every night, Toru Kumon carefully prepared mathematics problems on a sheet of paper for his son to solve for 30 minutes the following afternoon. He carefully watched these worksheets to his son's growing ability to help the boy think for himself and grasp the concepts with little or no assistance at all.

Toru Kumon saw his son effortlessly self-learn concept after concept, which improved his grades and quickly allowed him to learn comfortably well in advance of his school curriculum. This proved to Toru Kumon that if education could truly nurture and nurture each child's ability, human would be able to learn comfortably beyond expectations beyond school curriculum, thus leading to a more enjoyable school experience, opening up their lives and strengthening their character.

Encouraged by the requests of many local parents, Toru Kumon decided to open a mathematics study center in his home for the children in his neighborhood. He witnessed that these children also responded enthusiastically to the worksheets and learning method. It led to his first decision: to help as many children as possible pursue their potential in the same way.

Today, students are able to study mathematics and language worksheets through the Kumon Method in 43 countries around the globe. Every hour of the day, children in some parts of the world are studying their Kumon worksheets which are matched to their individual ability, enabling them to develop their own potential through self-learning.

We offer our sincere thanks to all families who have studied with Kumon over the last 50 years. We also offer our thanks to the millions of current students, their parents, and all the people who have so warmly welcomed Kumon's centers as education hubs in their communities.

All of us are dedicated to the learning and blossoming of our students. Our wish is that each child develops personal goals and big dreams for the future. We will continue to serve our communities through the development of such children.

The associates of Kumon resolve to continuously study, think and grow as educators, always mindful of our tremendous responsibility for children and the future.

We will continue to pursue the potential of children around the globe for the next 50 years!

For more information about the Kumon Program, please call us at (02) 845-5226, or at 1800-1888-5226 toll-free (outside Metro Manila).
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Bush asks US C

From page A1

in all time low. Bush lacked the political muscle to push bold ideas, and he did not try. The rare possible exception was the economy.

He urged lawmakers to approve urgently a $168 billion plan to stave off a recession through tax rebates—negotiated with Democratic and Republican lawmakers—for families and incentives for businesses to invest in new plants and equipment.

"As we meet tonight, our economy is undergoing a period of uncertainty," Bush said. "And at kitchen tables across our country, there is concern about our economic future."

US buildup in Iraq

Since the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, the war has been a major topic of Bush's annual addresses to Congress. He said the buildup of 30,000 American troops and an increase in Iraqi forces "have achieved results few of us could have imagined just a couple years ago."

"Some may deny the surge is working," Bush said. "But among the terrorists, there is no doubt that al-Qaeda is on the run in Iraq, and this enemy will be defeated."

He announced no troop withdrawals except for a cut to the return of the 20,000 sent last year for the "surge" troop buildup.

He said Gen. David Petraeus, the top US commander in Iraq, had warned that "too fast a drawdown would result in the disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces, al-Qaida-Iraq regaining lost ground, [and] a marked increase in violence." Members of Congress, howling comic as fit and ashamed as much, yet must not allow this to happen."

Bush also presided Congress to extend a law that allows surveillance of suspected terrorists, renew his education law and approve free trade pacts with Colombia, Panama and South Korea.

Obama and Clinton

Before Bush arrived, his Democratic would-be successors and their well-wishers clogged the center aisle of the House chamber.

Sen. Barack Obama came first, followed closely by his new patron, Sen. Edward Kennedy, who on Monday endorsed Obama's attempt to become the nation's first black president. Two were

How can we protect them?

– Jaime Cardinal Sin

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

UN: Poor nations need help in retrieving stolen billions

NUSA DUA, INDONESIA—FORMER SOVIET arms dealer suspect to another billions of dollars of stolen assets spirited away to global financial havens, officials said at a United Nations anti-corruption conference in Bali until on Tuesday.

"Time is of the essence" when trying to find the money, said Antonio Maria Costa, executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, which convened the graft conference.

Officials at the conference said the task of uncovering the assets had been made tougher by the growing complexity of the world's financial system and the emergence of new financial centers prepared to take shady funds.

"This difficulty has been compounded by success of high technology, where people can move data literally through his messaging systems, through their mobile phones or through the internet," Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said on the sidelines of the conference being attended by more than 130 countries.

As of late, the track record of finding assets is patchy.

Search for Marcos wealth

It took the Philippines almost 18 years to retrieve some assets from the estate of the late ferdinand Marcos. The late dictator stranded up to $10 billion of stolen assets, a report by Transparency International estimates.

It is the case of Nigeria's Sani Abacha, estimated to have taken up to $5 billion, it took five to six years to get it out intact.

Indonesia has made little progress tracking down the fortune of the late former President Suharto, put by Transparency International at $15-$35 billion.

Stolen asset recovery

Last September, the world Bank and the UN launched the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, which aims to help poorer nations with technical assistance in retrieve assets.

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption requires member to make corruption a criminal offense, as well as making them to cooperate with each other over graft and recovery stolen assets.

"Stolen assets sit quickly in idle bank accounts, fancy yachts, decaying real estate and deserted mansions," Costa said.

Huguette Labelle, chair of Transparency International, said in an interview she was worried about the failure of some global financial centers—such as Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland—to ratify the anti-graft convention.

Aimee Thurnherr, Swiss deputy state secretary, said his nation had returned $1.6 billion over 20 years to nations of origin even that "Swiss banking secrecy laws do not prevent work."

"If you want to have an offshore sustainable financial center, you have to keep it clean," said Thurnherr.

ongress...

to The World, Page A19.)

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is opposing Obama and is seeking to become the first female US president, attacked the chamber's low minimum later, equally snubbed by well-wishers. She reached out and shook Kennedy's hand. Obama, who stood nearby, waited away.

In the Democratic response to the State of the Union address, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas urged Bush to work with Congress and help the United States regain its global ownership damaged by the war.

"The last five years have cost us dearly...in lives lost, in thousands of wounded warriors whose homes may never be the same in challenges we may not have as closer because we've taken our eyes consistent elsewhere," Sebelius said. "America's foreign policy has left us with fewer allies and more enemies."

The war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 1,048 members of the US military and many times more Iraqis.

Just a temporary fix

On policy, Sebelius made reference to the short-term stimulus package that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Bush announced last week, suggesting that "it appears we'll be able the first step toward meeting our challenges and solving our problems." The package of tax cuts still must be approved by the Senate.

"If more Republicans in Congress stand with us this year, we won't have to wait for some president to remove America's side in the world and fight a more effective war on terror," Sebelius said.

Other Democrats were celebrating one ruling story against us...the end of Bush's presidency.

"Tonight is a real letter night in American history. It is the last time George Bush will give the State of the Union. Now your job will be to choose choice president giving it," predicted Hillary Clinton, drawing cheers during a campaign stop in Connecticut before attending Bush's speech.

Overshadowed by campaign

The annual State of the Union address normally ranks among the biggest events in the US political calendar, delivered with pomp and ceremony to lawmakers from both chambers and to other powerful Washington officials attending the joint session.

This year's speech has been overshadowed by the campaign for Democratic and Republican nominations to succeed Bush, who is limited by the Constitution from seeking a third term. Sen. John McCain, a leading contender for the Republican nomination to succeed Bush, did not even attend the session but stayed in Florida to campaign.

Aides had said Bush would not use Monday night's address as a summation of his time in office, but he did. He turned to the phrase "over the past several years" when talking about some of the important efforts of his administration...tax relief, participation in religious charities, his global freedom agenda and increased funding for overseas AP

Billion received by public officials. From his developed countries are put at $20 billion to $40 billion per year, or between 20 to 40 percent of official development assistance.

Robert Klitgaard, a corruption expert, said it was best to make the task

ple of stolen high-profile corruptions. "If a few big fish are fried and they see that," it sends a powerful signal, he said. Reuters

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Damned with praise

EDITORIAL

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT SUSILO BAMBANG Yudhoyono sets the tone when he called on his countrymen "to pay their last respects to one of Indonesia's best sons." The Indonesian government pulled out all the stops to bury former President Suharto, who died Sunday without ever having to face trial. Despite having been deposed by people power in 1997, he lived long enough to die, not as a thoroughly discredited ex-dictator, but more along the lines of an unlucky former statesman.

Hugo Restall, writing in the Wall Street Journal, loftily intoned, "The positive contributions of the man who made Indonesia a respected member of the international community deserve at least equal emphasis." Echoing similar sentiments made early this year by Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, Restall wrote: "Consider that when General Suharto came to power after a failed communist coup in 1965, Indonesia was an economic basket case and a troublemaker to the region. The pro-communist populism of President-for-Life Sukarno had led the country down a dead end. Think of Sukarno as the Hugo Chavez of his era."

Lee Kuan Yew made a spirited defense of his departed, threatened friend in his letter of condolence. "I have no doubt history will accord ... Suharto a place of honor in Indonesia's history when his life's work is studied in calm perspective," he predicted.

The Australian newspaper editorialized that "for Australia, [Suharto was] the most important and beneficial Asian leader in the entire period after World War II." The paper and conservative Australian leaders cited the Indonesian strongman's interest in regional stability, a line echoed by President Macapagal-Arroyo. "Generations of Filipinos and Southeast Asians will remember President Suharto for his key role in regional community building and for his contributions to consolidating the gains of peacebuilding in Mindanao," Ms Arroyo said.

The Wall Street Journal commentary concludes by comparing Suharto to Deng Xiaoping, both great men, and responsible for a great deal of development in their nations. And, we might add, a great deal of bloodshed. Deng, in his twilight years, ordered the massacre in Tiananmen Square. As for Suharto, his rise to power was bloody: 78,000 dead from 1965 to 1966, according to government estimates; half a million by Reuters' reckoning; a million, according to the American historians Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr. Over the next decade, according to human rights groups, another 300,000 people were killed, vanished, or starved as Suharto crushed independence movements in East Timor, Aceh and Papua New Guinea.

And in case the so-called greatness of Suharto, in the minds of some observers, shouldn't be tainted by tens of thousands of deaths, there remains the question of a personal fortune in the tens of billions of dollars.

Forbes.com quotes a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in September placing the funds siphoned off by Suharto at $35 billion. His children are immensely wealthy: Bambang Trihatmodjo (one time owner of luxury sports car marque Maserati) has a reported net worth of $100 million, 33rd on Forbes' 2007 Indonesia's richest list.

In a Canadian Press report, Jeffrey Winters, associate professor of political economy at Northwestern University, provided a sustaining-up of the economic costs of Suharto's rule. Indonesia robbed "Indonesia of some of the most golden decades, and its best opportunity to move from a poor to a middle-class country," he said.

To be sure, Suharto fostered a statesmanlike attitude towards Asean, and together with Lee and Perdana Mahathir, turned our part of the world into a bulwark against the expansion of communism. But a time, Suharto and Marcos achieved spectacular growth for their countries, but unlike Lee, they failed to step down and groom qualified successors. They also tested their countries, which is something Lee has never been successfully accused of doing. This makes Lee an aberration, and neither Marcos nor Suharto a great man.

This goes to the heart of the grim inheritance Suharto left: the Indonesian people—one that again proves true the old adage that if you steal enough, all will be forgiven, as well as the one that says absolute power corrupts absolutely.

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A strange decision from the Supreme Court

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

SO FAR THERE ARE TEN SCORE PRESIDENTS OF Philippine Episcopal Arroyo. Pilipinas is now in several months, she has prematurely freed from prison a convicted plunderer, a convicted child rapist (elected because the people promised), a convicted prison killer, and a homosexual rapist (convicted of molesting an 18-month-old baby. She has allowed the convicted mastermind in the murder of two lawyers in Bindoy to serve his prison sentence in a private luxury hospital in Makati, without any guards. She has taken his vote with her on her trips abroad and allowed him to claim three half million peso cash "gifts" to politicians to, of all places, the presidential palace.

The President cannot be accused of being too lenient to prisoners, however. A number of prisoners who have served their sentences, most of them ex-congressmen, are still in jail.

Meanwhile, the billion of scores of journalists are still not free.

The police cannot be accused of not being able to arrest anybody, however. The PNP arrested scores of journalists covering the mutiny still at the Peninsula Hotel in Makati, handcuffed them and took them all to a military camp. And to drive home the point, Justice(?) Secretary Raul Gonzalez warned journalists that they would be arrested again if they do not leave scenes of crime when told to do so by the PNP.

* * *

Another UBE achievement. She upheld the reputation of the Philippines in Dubai. While the heads of state of more affluent countries stayed in luxe, expensive hotels, our President, although coming from a poor country struggling to balance its budget, stayed at the tallest hotel in Dubai and the most expensive in the world.

Earlier, she flew to Davos with her entourage in a chartered plane. She showed to the world that Filipinos are not "fresh from the banana."

Furthermore, she is putting the Philippines in the world map by attempting to put herself in the Guinness Book of World Records as "the most traveled Filipino government exec," beating the record set by Precious Fidel V. Romeo. She has already established a record as the first Philippine president with a trillion peso budget.

* * *

Sen. Loren Legarda, whom many people call the "unpunished Vice President of the Philippines," is cast as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal. Several days ago, the PET dismissed her election protest against Vice President Noli de Castro because of "abandonment" and also because of alleged "lack of legal and factual basis." The latter reason means she was not able to show sufficient evidence of cheating in the 2004 elections. The two-time reinvented rapper-lawyer-actress-singer-TV host-broadcaster-senator-columnist-and-all-the-rest-of-

Democracy's retreat

ANALYSIS

Jaimundo Diamzella

THE PHILIPPINES POSTED LAST YEAR AN IMPRESSIVE 7.3% GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH OF 6.9 TO 7.2 percent, its fastest expansion in 31 years. The government reported that the economy expanded 7.1 percent in the first three quarters of 2007, prompting President Macapagal-Arroyo to claim last week in the State of Economic Forum in Davao, Mindanao that the Philippines is now "poised to be the tiger of Southeast Asia despite a global economic slowdown."

The litany of this economic performance was limited to setbacks for political dynasties in the 2007 elections. While the economy was making big gains and lifting the Philippines from the status of perennial basket case, political liberties were waging a retreat, rebutting the classic debate in academic circles over whether economic growth and democracy are compatible in developing countries, especially those in transition from authoritarian to democratic governance.

The retreat of democracy is most starkly underlying when viewed from the perspective that the Philippines is one of the oldest democracies in Asia and in 1986 People Power Revolution resulted a model of non-violent transition from authoritarian.

The regression of democracy and the abridgement of political rights took place during 26 successive quarters of unassisted economic growth, ranging from 6 to 7 percent, under the aegis of a democratic government.

In an 2008 report, titled "Freedom in Retreat: Is the Tide Turning?" the New York-based Freedom House focused on the state of Philippine democracy. The report, which was released last week, along the states that showed a "significant decline" in political rights and civil liberties in 2007, and marked many observers by disqualifying the Philippines as an "electoral democracy."

The independent non-government organization that supports expansion of freedom, Freedom House has been monitoring political rights and civil liberties around the world since 1972. In the report released in 2007, they argued that "a worrisome setback for global freedom." The report said the decline in freedom "was reflected in reversals in one-fifth of the world's countries. This year's results continued a predominantly declining trend over a period of several years."

The report said, "A number of countries that had previously shown progress toward democracy have regressed, while many of the most influential key Free States showed signs of improvement. As the second consecutive year that the survey has registered a global decline in political rights and civil liberties, Freedom of Freedom Index have said concerned to concern."

The countries leading the list of losers states: "Increasingly in these countries—the Philippines, Bangladesh and Kenya—disqualified those have the worst of democracy list. The decline of these countries is significant given their size and the fact that was, the Philippines and Kenya, were previously regarded as important contributors to the democratic world and models for Asia and Africa."

For the second consecutive year, the Freedom House survey noted "a decline in freedom for the Philippines, due to serious allegations of high-level corruption, the decline of President Joseph Estrada, and the spike in political killings." The report was up to (the May 2007) legislative elections." The survey said the Philippines' "political rights rating declined from 3 to 4" mainly as a result of these factors. The rating system is based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the "most free" and 7 the "least free."

The Freedom Index has downgraded the Philippines as a "partly free" since since 2005, the first time it was downgraded. This downgrade cites the deterioration of democracy in 2006. The Philippines remained stuck in the category of so-called "partly free nations," in the 2007 survey of 193 countries and 18 territories. The number of nations judged free stood at 90, representing 47 percent of the total of the world's 193 nations, and 3,018,500,000 people or 46 percent of the global population. Those considered partly free stood at 58, or 30 percent of all countries assessed, comprising 2,193,900,000 people, or 33 percent of the world's total. Those found not free accounted for nearly 2.4 billion people, about 36 percent of the total.

The Freedom in the World Index defines a "free" country as one where there is broad scope for open political competition, a climate of respect for civil liberties, significant independent civil free, and independent media. A "partly free" country is one in which there is limited respect for political rights and civil liberties. Partly free countries frequently suffer from an environment of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic and religious strife, and often a setting in which a single political party enjoys dominance despite the facade of limited pluralism. A "not free" country is one where basic political rights are severely, and basic civil liberties are widely violated.

In disqualifying the Philippines as an electoral democracy, Freedom House considered the following phenomena: a competitive multi-party system; universal adult suffrage; regular, free, and relatively competitive elections conducted under adequate safeguards against fraud; sufficient access for major political parties to the electronic media and the right periodically open political campaigning. A country cannot be described as an electoral democracy if it suffers the ongoing overwhelming dominance of a single party or movement over numerous national elections.

"A country is removed from the ranks of electoral democracies if its last national election has failed to meet the criteria listed above," Freedom House says.

Who's publicity hungry?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT TAKES ONE TO "KNOW" ONE, JUSTICE SECretary Raul Gonzalez, stated to comment on the mini-fuel Monday by journalists seeking more information on government's anti-graft campaign. Into the media, somewhat sourly: "I don't know the members of the media were also publicity hungry."

Well, how someone who doesn't of his mouth at regular intervals, losing some with offensive and horrible remarks that have alienated just about everybody who has had need for judicial intervention, I suppose he has conveniently forgotten among the states that showed a "significant decline" in political rights and civil liberties in 1971, and marked many observers by disqualifying the Philippines as an "electoral democracy."

The independent non-government organization that supports expansion of freedom, Freedom House has been monitoring political rights and civil liberties around the world since 1972. In the report released in 2007, they argued that "a worrisome setback for global freedom." The report said the decline in freedom "was reflected in reversals in one-fifth of the world's countries. This year's results continued a predominantly declining trend over a period of several years."

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THE CLAMOR IS ON AGAIN, WITH SOME PUSHING to dismantle against the officials and line enforcement agencies who "pushed" against the Manila Peninsula, supposedly in connection with the siege.

Lim, deputy executive director of the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, one of the civic organizations organized in the case, said the organization is "disappointed" in the decision. "Some said it should be symbolic," he continued, "but others contended that the rule should rather be strictly for government to attempt to control the media."

If they would only write down their reasons, however, our answers they will be enacted will go to add some fund for journalists, paving for the legal fees of journalists who are subject to legal action without recourse to legal aid.

By the way, it's not the fee for other journalists to add their names to the suits. You don't even have to have been at Manila Peninsula at all. Since the crimes of provocation are directed to the entire media community, you can join the suit even without any profession. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) is organizing in chapters all over the country to gather more signatures for the dismissal suit. Those who want to join the petitioners for the writ of prohibition, meanwhile, may contact any member of NUJP.

IF MORE OF the things of the petition for a writ of the Supreme Court officials, the Philippine Daily Inquirer also cited our small delegation, composed of Chel Diokno, Marie Reyes and Charie Villa of NBN-CBN, Coby Conde of The New York Times, and myself, to pose while Chel held up a copy of the petition. "Publicity hungry," the Inquirer described, sending for electronically smiling and beaming as the cameras clicked away.

To be honest, I was swinging from anger to amusement when I saw the picture. Anger at the title. It's true that I'm always willing to be photographed, but I'm even more willing to be photographed when I'm fighting for press freedom—among other things—in Edsa, and happiness that despite our differences, our network ours and courts to uncap the suspension, our media organizations could unite in a while get our act together in defense of our freedoms.

Worthless promises

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE BALIKATAN Heritage Board, the Philippine Embassy in Singapore and the National Historical Institute in Manila, a memorial to Jose Rizal's visits there is being constructed next to Raffles Hotel. The longtime used to be Rizal's favorite hotel, June 19. The site is the Botanical Gardens that he mentioned in his travel diary.

In Hong Kong, there are already two markers installed in the places where Rizal had a clinic and a house, and in Singapore, there is a swimming pool), the other in a quiet residential area in the mid-level accessible by escalator and called Rizal Manila Terrace ("Mercedes" spelled backwards).

That our history is being marked in other lands is a testament to the universality of Rizal's ideals, manic proceeds as a friendlier people to people level. For Filipinos visiting other lands for either business, work or pleasure, it is always heartwarming to find some connection with home.

Rizal's stay in Singapore also marked the place where the first Philippine flag was sewn before it was brought home by Emilio Aguinaldo when he returned the fight against Spain in 1898. The house where Marcela Agoncillo lived is no more, as the marker is in the middle of a children's playground.

When I left Singapore, I was reminded of a quote of that we can commemorate in Singapore. I remember the time Emilio Aguinaldo led these to create a crusade against him and the battle that battle he cannot paid by Spain to end the revolt in 1897. Aguinaldo was exiled to Singapore and Hong Kong and the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China. Instead a court sentence, Aguinaldo fled on Singapore on April 7, 1898. Quite long-waisted to find out where he stayed and with whom.

We do know that while in Singapore, Aguinaldo met with Spanish consul Sr. Edward Spencer Pratt, the American consul, with whom he had a series of secret meetings, one of which was held in the US consulate. History records that Pratt was so impressed by Aguinaldo that he arranged for his exile to the Philippines with George Dewey and the American hopefuls that sent the Spanish fleet to the Battle of Manila Bay of May 1, 1898. Aguinaldo was not able to join Dewey during the battle but arrived a few weeks later, assumed the fight and successfully declared Philippine independence from Spain on June 12, 1898.

After his exile Aguinaldo stopping for years were the scenes of Aguinaldo's visits. Did the US consul promise recognition of Philippine independence in exchange for Aguinaldo's help in the Spanish-American War? Despite what we've been taught, it is still worth that he indeed promised American support to obtain Philippine independence.

In the early evening of June 9, 1898, a group of guerrilla Filipino gathered at the US consulate and were welcomed by Pratt. After thanking the consul in a speech in French was cited by Sr. Isidro de Talens, expressing gratitude for America's moral and material support of Aguinaldo and the Philippine cause.

The scene that was described by the Singapore Free Press as simply fantastical. Pratt's desk had a small American flag, beside which the Filipino placed a framed photograph of Aguinaldo. Pratt's response, as reported by the Singapore Free Press, was brief:

"Today we have news of the brilliant achievements of your own distinguished leader, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, empowering us (and) with the beneficiary of us. You have just reason to be proud of what has been and is being accomplished by General Aguinaldo and your fellow countrymen under his command. When, in weeks ago, I learned that General Aguinaldo had arrived incognito in Singapore, I immediately sought him out, for I knew that his presence here in that he was the leader of the rebellion, and having communicated with Admiral Dewey, I accordingly arranged for him to join the latter, which he did at Cavite. The rest you know."

Pratt later received a letter of Aguinaldo saying:

"All is settled and I am very happy and grateful and it is now being shown that I was right in arranging for your cooperation with Admiral Dewey, and equally right in asking that you are given the support and encouragement which she could. Admiral Dewey has informed me that you have told him that I shall soon have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the success of Manila and return that matters, let me say that you will send me some basic instructions of the place and the incidents, such as the flag or flags of the United States and Philippines, as souvenir of our meeting at Singapore and of the important results which have ensued."

When Aguinaldo did not know was that Consul Pratt was later rebuked in writing by no less than the US secretary of state for entering into "unauthorized engagements with Philippine insurgent leaders long after were so late on June 27, 1898. Pratt was eventually dismissed from the US foreign service, but he did nothing to disabuse Aguinaldo of the use that his promises to leader in Singapore. Returning to the Philippines, Aguinaldo was the recognition of the Philippine government in the US. Aguinaldo planned to be much more by offering Pratt a position in Philippine Customs and granting him commercial privileges as soon as his government was established.

Pratt declined the offer. Years later he wrote to be a wise man. But I want to know where in Singapore this deception took place.

Comments are welcome at ocampo@philstar.com.ph.

18 or 24?

THE ENCOURAGED BY ARCHBISHOP OSCAR CRUZ'S interest in increasing the minimum age of marriage, from the current 18 to 24. Cruz has been a member of the local Catholic Church's National Appellate Matrimonial Tribunal, which handles annulments, since 1971, and besides it as present, the Manila's the country's oldest marriages are many couples seeing "psychologically unprepared and emotionally unstable."

I do not actually favor the proposed increase, but am heartened by the way the bishop has opened up discussion on the role of marriage. Our society is "Pinoy Kasi" and has evolved to look at marriage as a cut-off. Many Filipinos have actually adopted the Michael J. Tan, reflecting to 1 Corinthians 7:1-9: "those to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

"Yes" is the short answer to "Is it good to marry?" We usually bound partners up about their primary children. I'm talking about a gay son, they'll comment: "Ian just need to find him a girl and soon he marries he'll change."

By far the most common function of marriage seems to be to control the young's libido—especially when a pregnancy has occurred.

Child-bides

I wanted to focus on that last point. We keep hearing complaints from dogs about "immaturity" among the youth, prompted mainly by the belief that most young people are having sex before marriage. But we forget that until 1980, the minimum age for marriage for girls (formally, girls) was 14 and for boys, 16. If you think that was awful, there was a time, dating back to the Spanish period, when the minimum age of marriage was 12. Be under our hands reading about child brides in other countries but we had those not until fairly recently.

He was still say a 14 year old married girl is immoral. But ever time, countries have banned child marriages, largely because of public health reasons. A 14 year old mother faces many risks during pregnancy and childbirth because her body is not yet fully developed. Many are also malnourished and premature children are even then more their life.

After we adopted the new Family Code in 1988 and raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 for both sexes, parents complained because the young lovers, including a very pregnant daughter, couldn't get married. The illegitimated parents were also affected because then, the law considered them to have come again lower the age of marriage. He was well intentioned, hoping to cut down the number of illegitimate births. He probably didn't realize that a 14 year old married mother was still child having a kid.

The fact is that despite the law governing of social welfare, we're the not proper. I shudder to think what it would have been like if the bill had been proposed a few years later, because that social welfare secretary had since become our president.

A few years back I attended Dr. Teresa Ongsiaq, a Maryknoll Sister who has devoted elementary to underprivileges. The researcher was about young marriages. Sister Teresa found that many of these young couples, the girls especially, were unstable as a result of their early marriages. Some of the young wives had a torment, and a third pregnancy before they had turned 20. It is a vicious cycle of poverty. Many of these girls had even as the young couples, when drop-outs from high school, found it more difficult finding work.

Some Catholic priests, notably the Redemptorists, as well as nuns like Sister Teresa, now counsel young unmarried pregnant girls to postpone marriage until after they've delivered the baby. It is a difficult decision for the parents of pregnant girls, who can easily find other Catholic priests or activist religious denominations to perform the ceremony. Even more shocking, Sister Teresa found that teenager still-trials, as well as some religious, would date the age of the teenage couple to get married. The tradition of child brides and groom lives on.

Parental guidance

It is important to have a minimum age of marriage, mainly to prevent child brides/dads. Most countries in the world peg it at the average between 18 and 21. If we raise our minimum age of marriage to 24, it would be a step in the right direction of leaving the highest legal age for marriage in the world. Currently the highest minimum age is in the People's Republic of China: 22 for males and 20 for females.

Maybe we can then be off, actually. Even under the present family Code, parental consent is required for those aged 18 to 21. Less only that, for those aged 21 to 24, the law requires parental advice.

What should we do then? It would help if the Catholic Church would be more supportive of family education in schools, as well as pre-and-postnatal. The age of puberty has dropped—children living are going to a world of drugs, sex, alcoholism and possibly other vices. We can't continue to pretend our teenagers are still birds-and-bees girls.

Even before puberty, children will already have crushes. When the onset of physical changes, puppy love turns into infatuation. It is at this point that I believe the parents should step in and encourage their teenagers to postpone marriage for at least one year to choose a college course, adjust to them about working overseas and yes, thinking about the family they want to have later on.

Still help, too, if Catholic schools reduced the stigma around a premature pregnancy. Family education should acknowledge such pregnancies social, but one mistake shouldn't be compounded through a forced marriage. Many of these schools still cajol unmarried girls for getting pregnant. It's this stigma that prevents families in from their children getting married.

There have been many studies showing that the age of marriage increases with the level of education. The Philippines is a striking exception. We have also only high levels of educational attainment but people are still marrying early. I suspect it's partly due to a lack of options. In an open society, and this is the world, with the internet and the one-young find solace in their relationships. Pushed by mass media's rose depictions of romantic love, marriage becomes a reward and a refuge, as well as a way of escaping their existing family life, unaware of course that married life can be even more difficult.

So much positive early marriage. Even the prospects of working overseas, the lure hope for many Filipinos, may actually hasten a marriage, with the idea that you profess your love before leaving.

I regret, let's push for later marriages. But this can't be done through legislation. We need to work harder in the homes and in schools to get the young to understand what marriage entails. Meanwhile, we work on building prospects for a better life, here in the Philippines. When a person knows he or she can have a better life, and wants that attained for his or her prospective, the decision to marry will be more deliberate, more committed.

Do doctors truly care for patients?

LETTERS

THE WAY DOCTORS AND THE PHILIPPINE Medical Association are spreading myths and questions about the efficacy and safety of generic medicines shows that, contrary to their claim (Inquirer, 1/22/08), taking care of patients is not their primary concern. These doctors should be reminded that while they are preoccupied with their fears about generic and cheaper medicines, indigent patients are being deprived of safe and affordable medicines. Generic drugs are beneficial to poor patients, particularly those with critical illnesses who need maintenance medicines but who cannot afford the branded drugs.

The doctors' fear of being disempowered and their claims that the bill will violate the doctor-patient relationship are unfounded. We do not understand that while 20 percent of Filipinos do not have regular access to medicines, our physicians are more concerned with their patient's cost being reduced than with their patient's lack of access to prescribed medicines.

The doctors' insistence that they be allowed to prescribe their preferred brand of medicines instead of the generic being given the option to buy cheaper generic medicines is the main obstacle to the full implementation of the Generics Act of 1988. The doctors are again making the same demand and using the proliferation of counterfeit and substandard medicines as a justification, which is the same fundamental justification being used by big, foreign pharmaceutical companies in their opposition to the bill.

Not even the doctors' preference to prescribe drugs is above the universal right to health. We urge the Senatorial conference committee to uphold public health interests above those of the few when it deliberates on the Cheaper Medicines Bill.

—ESTELITA P. BITANAJERO, ALAN PANGAN, Cat-Bar Cats, Cat-Bar Pain Network (CBPNet), 42 St. Mary St., Cubao, Quezon City

MIGRANT birds cruise a stone of grace and beauty at Candaba swamp.

Reconciliation, not recall, in Pampanga

RAROUT 8 YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE the 2004 elections, but it seems that the optimism of the Kapampangans has been dampened because of the insensitive loquacities grabbed in the provincial governorship.

So it is, politics in Pampanga follows the blueprint of a marathon that cannot be always practical. Politics and ethics may share in the concept of a common good, but in the practical world, they are widely divergent. Ethics does not discriminate between the means (manner) and the end (goal). Politics upholds the use of practical wisdom in the conduct of politics. Practical wisdom may not always satisfy the standards of ethics, but it may be most beneficial for it is only implored on some-to-case basis.

Apparently, the over reuse of the gridlock in Pampanga is the idealism of two political opponents of Gov. Ed Panlilio. There is talk about the arrogance and conceitedness of those people, which got to the way of making things work in the province. It is for this reason that I urge them to make the ultimate sacrifice. Only if and when these concerned officials finally hand over their positions to people with equal competence and more practical wisdom can we expect the long-awaited unsteady shaking down what seems like mindless birds crowing their lives of fire.

Not one, it's not their fault. If the birds get shot, it's a game after all. And it's for something greater now: lower spirits, especially when no one gets caught, and people from all over get to see the banners' grinning and triumphant faces on the billboards.

Where there organization's name, is re-

—MARIA ESTELITA A. MAGLAQUI, gdmaglaqui@yahoo.com.ph

We're all in a game of obliteration

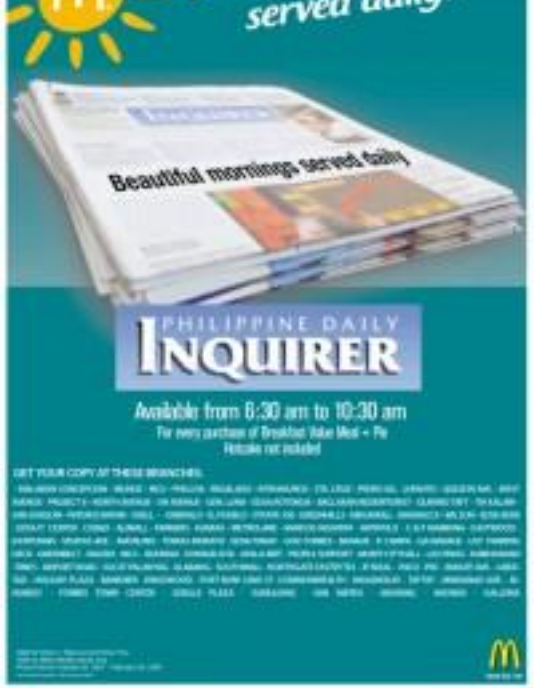
PERHAPS IT WAS JUST PLAIN OLD dull that drove hunters from the Barobed Air Rifle Hunting Club to kill birds. (Inquirer, 1/13/08) You would be surprised many of them innocently saying "no." Not "just." Their shared ignorance affirms many Filipinos whose habits are indeed horrible.

However, we refrain from condemning such senseless acts. They are just plain folks, banging out together every last weekend, aimlessly shooting down what seems like mindless birds crowing their lives of fire.

Not one, it's not their fault. If the birds get shot, it's a game after all. And it's for something greater now: lower spirits, especially when no one gets caught, and people from all over get to see the banners' grinning and triumphant faces on the billboards.

Where there organization's name, is re-

—RENE BOLNAS, Advocacy Unit, Haribon Foundation, 3/F Station 6, Scout Bldg., 373 Aurora Blvd. Cubao, Quezon City



Forgive Ninoy's assassins

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO the news report titled "Pardon Ninoy killers, Joker urges" (Inquirer, 1/14/08)

I agree with Sen. Joker Arroyo, the executive secretary of former President Corazon C. Aquino. The 13 convicted soldiers now in jail for the assassination of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. should be released. As Filipinos, they are also entitled to executive clemency, a privilege open to other prisoners in our democratic country; they deserve to be pardoned in the Catholic nation.

Forgiving them behind bars for another 20 years will not punish the masterminds or prod him to come out into the open. Those soldiers have been used by powerful people. Though they are not innocent, they had only limited information about the real intent of their crime.

They have already suffered and there is no more information that can be squeezed from them. Even during the presidency of Mr. Aquino, he failed to get the real culprit.

I have great respect for the Aquinos and for our love, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III. I understand their grief. But they cannot live in their past. Living the present is what is more important. If the late Pope John Paul II could forgive his foe, would he assassin, why can't they?

—GEOFFREY S. CORUÑA, Fugoso Apartment, San Juan Extension, Zone 4, Barangkilan, Cavite

Zubiri not at par with laureates

SEN. MIRIT ZUBIRI'S STATEments regarding the Bayluck Law raise a lot of questions about his motives and credibility. I am surprised that he has the gall to question and assail the authority of Nobel laureates by saying that they are being paid by advertisers. He even challenged Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago to a debate.

For he aware that he was dealing with individuals way above his league, and that what he said is insulting to us, too? And it did.

There would always be two sides to a story and if there are interest groups supporting a proposed or existing law, there are also those who oppose them. By accusing Nobel laureates and fellow lawmakers of serving as apologists for oil companies, Senator Zubiri exposed himself as a champion of landlords and their ilk. And since the senator comes from the landed elite in Mindanao, and has been a crater in advertisements put out by biofuels advocates, I rest my case.

This is basic Philippine politics: muddying from those who are themselves wallowing in muck. It seems that Zubiri is treading the San Juan Senatorial courage and stability and I am afraid that he has already gone over to the latter half.

—RYOKO TAMAYA, 42 Pinoy Avenue, Quezon City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Sigma and Maconda Streets, City of Makati; or send a fax to this: 897-4705, 897-4704, or e-mail to readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Gen. Esperon told, time to fade away

IT SEEMS THAT AFP CHIEF Gen. Hermogenes Esperon has nothing better to do than his matrix of an impending coup. Is he one of Gright ideas? ("Coup phones running low on finds—Esperon," Inquirer, 1/21/08) Or is he trying to justify an extension of his term?

I believe he should be spending his little time left in the service to find ways of solving the communist and Islamic rebellions once and for all, to professionalize the ranks of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to give the best soldiers the support they show, and he should stop poll-sticking.

As the old adage says, "Old generals never die, they just fade away." General Esperon, it's time for you to quietly fade away.

—ROSARIZON ROSETE, rosarizon@yahoo.com

Veteran expires without pension

MY CHARISMATIC FATHER went without enjoying his pension because the processing of his application for service benefits was delayed. The application was probably filed 15 years ago. He was able to submit all the requirements and the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office just kept telling him to continue following up his application, and this went on until he died. What a terrible experience with PVAO.

Anyway, since my grandfather didn't enjoy the benefits, can my grandmother already exercise eleven more, get those benefits instead? A feedback from PVAO would be greatly appreciated.

—RICKY MORENO, 214 La Rioneda St., Lone 5 Signal Village, Taguig City, rickymed17@yahoo.com

World Pool Championship, bakit hindi?

– Efren "Bata" Reyes

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

After 'curly hair,' PNP hunts 'PLDT' lineman

From page A1

Director General Avelino Razon, chief of the Philippine National Police, yesterday said it was heeding the request of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to check the identity of a man wearing a yellow PLDT uniform in "shooting incidents" against the former administration on Nov. 29 last year.

The man was purportedly caught on video by ABS-CBN network ongoing on leave to join the walkout from ex-Makati townmates and the subsequent holdout at the Peninsula Manila hotel by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon (R) and junior military officers.

The Department of Justice had earlier asked broadcast networks to turn over their video tapes of the Nov. 29 events.

Razon told reporters that he had ordered Senior Supt. Asher Bolina, chief of the Metro Manila police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to "review the videos and look for the man in the PLDT uniform."

"We will see if there is probative value in the video footage," he said.

Bolina told the reporters that the CIDG would determine the identity of the man and whether he was in violation of the law.

Inquiry ongoing

It was Gonzalez himself who extended the request to Razon on the sidelines of the welcome ceremony for President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Ms Arroyo returned home yesterday from her trip to Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

Gonzalez described the supposed PLDT employee as being in his 30s and on the heavyside.

"I'm just interested to find out who he is, so we can check his background," the justice secretary said. "We should know everyone involved [in the Nov. 29 events]. We want to know the people there."

Gonzalez said he took notice of the man because ABS-CBN had focused on the latter in the reward that was walking on Ayala Avenue at the time.

He said that in the 30-second video, the man could be seen wearing a PLDT uniform and what looked like an ID card.

The man was telling the people around him that Trillanes and brig. Gen. Danilo Lim were right in doing what they did, and that those who believed in them should join them, according to Gonzalez.

"Ang mga tao na nanonood sa kanila ay dapat sumama," he quoted the man as saying.

Asked whether the man was liable for anything, Gonzalez said the man could be charged with resisting to soldiers because he was in effect "speaking against the government."

'Who is that?'

Earlier, the PNP had said a female reporter was caught on video helping one of Trillanes' cohorts, Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, escape from the hotel.

The reporter was not officially named or charged, but PNP sources speaking on condition of anonymity identified her as Dana Batnag, a senior investigative reporter.

However, the video footage merely showed Batnag as either appearing to be an interviewer with Faeldon.

Up until yesterday, Razon refused to name the reporter. Asked if the PNP would withdraw its case against Batnag, he said: "Who is that? I don't know what you are talking about. We have not filed anything."

In a statement issued on Monday, the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap) said it viewed with grave concern the allegation against Batnag.

"As journalists, we are appalled that the authorities have allowed and even encouraged this claim in Boat-initiated smokescreen and for weeks, in the process putting a cloud of doubt on the professionalism not only of this [sic] but also of media people in general," Focap said.

It said its members had adhered to the highest standards of accuracy, objectivity and independence in their reportage since the martial law years.

'We're not angry'

Razon said the PNP was continuing not only its investigation of the Nov. 29 events but also the search for Faeldon, for whom rapture (?) million had been put up.

He also said the PNP welcomed the filing of charges by media groups for the arrest of journalists on Nov. 29.

"We welcome it. We are not the least bit angry. That is an opportunity for the media, the police and the authorities to resolve this issue," he said.

Razon said he did not view the temporary restraining order issued by a Makati court barring any government agent from threatening and arresting media members as an indication that the police were trying to detaining journalists on Nov. 29.

"Not really. Those who filed the case requested a TRO and it was granted. It does not mean that the entire case was over already."

'We love the media'

Razon had earlier said the PNP "might" bring countercharges against the media if the latter filed suit against the agency.

But yesterday, he said: "There's a possibility, not a certainty. We did not consider filing charges against the media. That's how much we love the media. We said we might do that in our defense. So now, we just address our action in our defense to the data out."

Members of the media have so far launched three legal actions in connection with the Nov. 29 arrest of journalists and subsequent government warnings of arrest and prosecution. With a report from Marguerite C. Ortiz

HOT THE AFGAN SUSPECT The PNP for one at least, has quit nagging media persons and is even looking into this man's involvement in the Trillanes caper. Wearing a PLDT lineman's uniform, the man was caught on camera by ABS-CBN during a pro-Trillanes rally outside the Peninsula on the day of Trillanes' short-lived rebellion on Nov. 29, 2007. The TV grab was made available to the media by the INQ.

GIVING HOPE TO MILLIONS
CARING FOR COUNTLESS FILIPINOS FAR AND WIDE

WALANG KAPOS,
WALANG KUPAS SA PANALO!

Sa nakaraang Lotto 6/49 draw noong ika-30 ng Enero 2008, bakit ng lahat na apat na masuwerteng Pilipino – lalo sa Metro Manila at isa sa Dumra City – ang magiliti-hati sa 155-milyon pisong (P155 million) jackpot prize.

Ang hindi alam ng nakararami, may kabuuang 194,479 kabuhayan pa rin ang nagwagi ng kabuuang P57,378,780.00 o mahigit P57-milyon bilang kahagi ng minor prizes ng nasabing draw.

Sa nasabing bilang, 493 ang nanalo ng P28,368,800.00 dahil tumama ang tres sa anim na numerong tinayaan nila. Umabot naman sa 13,889 ang nagwagi ng P13,889,000.00 sang lamesan ang ajud sa anim na numerong lumabas. May 180,137 winners din ang nakapagwi ng kabuuang P18,810,780.00 matapos na makapili ng tamang tatlong numero sa kumbinasyon na lumabas.

Patunay ito na hindi lamang mga jackpot winners ang nakatatapag-uwi ng malaking halaga ng pera dahil sa pagtaya sa Lotto.

Kaakibat din ng pagtaya ng Prize Fund para sa 6/49 Lotto ay ang pagtiti ng gaing dilong Charity Fund. Mula P14,607,466.68 noong ika-03 ng Enero 2008, ito ngayon ay umabot na sa halagang P136,111,078.21.

Patunay din ito na patuloy ang record na pagbangkito ng mamamayang Pilipino sa Lotto 6/49 sa kabila ng desisyon ng Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) na itaas ang halaga ng minimum na taya mula P10 tungo sa P20.

Sa mga gambling kapanalpan, nagpapasalamat ang PCSO sa lahat ng tumatangkilik sa Lotto 6/49 at sa lahat ng taya na pinapamahalaan ng ahensya tulad ng Super Lotto 6/48, Mega Lotto 6/42, 6 Digit, 4 Digit, Swertres (3-digit), Easy Two (2-digit), Keno, Small Town Lottery (STL) at tradisyonal na Sweepstakes Draws.

Tiniyak ng PCSO na aayat ang porsiyong sasa ahensya bilang Prize Fund upang bayaran ang lahat ng mga pinapalad na magwagi sa nasabing mga laro.

Hindi po naming maipagawa ito kung wala ang patuloy nimong suporta sa mga laro at gawain ng aming ahensya.

Sa ngalan sa ng mga kawani at mga nakulungan ng PCSO: maraming salamat po!

WALANG KULANG, WALANG KAPOS, WALANG KUPAS ANG PANALO SA PCSO

Where in the world is Mike Arroyo

By Tarra Quismundo and Norman Bordadora

ARROYO

THE HUSBAND OF PRESIDENT Maria Macapagal-Arroyo was noticeably absent when she returned from her seven-day trip to Switzerland and the Middle East yesterday morning, the eve of another hearing on the controversial broadband deal in which he has been implicated.

Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo was not on the chartered Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight that brought home Ms Arroyo and her entourage of more than 80 government officials, including Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago and at least 14 other lawmakers, Cabinet members and Malacañang staff.

His idea

Mike Arroyo was on his sister's side when she flew back left on Jan. 23 to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, sweetheart in Zurich and an investment round-about in Dubai.

Bankrolled by pliants, Arroyo's lawyer, Jesus Sison, said he had no idea where the President's husband was.

Last night, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo said he and his elder brother "Mike" were in Bacolod.

Contacted by the Inquirer, the congressman said he and the President's husband were still in Bacolod but "heard, in general personal [comments]."

Mike Arroyo left the country for a vacation on Sept. 17, 2007, one day before whistleblower Jun Lozada Jr. Security Ltd, nationalist and son of the Speaker, met it a Senate hearing that the President's husband had told him to "back off" from the National Broadband Network deal, which was bagged by the Chinese firm ZTE Corp.

Returning 15 days later, the President's husband told the media he had nothing to do with the deal and denied he had told De Venecia to "back off."

Full military honors

Ms Arroyo arrived to full military honors. Photo she emerged from the Palace chartered plane at the ramp area of the Shiraz Agulan International Airport. Command, Brig. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, tax authority officials and airport executives were also on hand to welcome Ms Arroyo.

Ms Arroyo immediately boarded a car at the end of the red carpet.

Her entourage then disclosed her passed through the terminal's arrival gallery, unlike the President.

Some were seen carrying what looked like souvenir bags aside from their luggage. Among them was Health Sec. Ms. Theresa Bersamin. Gerald, who was carrying a Prada shopping bag.

New ZTE witness backs off probe

From page A1

He can fill in the blanks," Cayetano told the Inquirer.

Amid allegations of overpricing, influence-peddling and payoffs to government officials that came to light in the Senate probe of the deal, President Macapagal-Arroyo scrapped the NBN contract on Dec. 3, 2007.

Lozada, chief executive officer of Philippine Forest Corp., was summoned to testify at 10 a.m. today at the resumption of the Senate investigation of the NBN deal, but he backed out because of threats from Malacañang, according to Sen. Panfilo Lacson who had been talking to him for the past two months.

Fears for his life

Lozada initially did not want to talk to Lacson, according to the senator. Lacson said Lozada got in touch with him later.

"He did not execute an affidavit. He doesn't even want to make any sparring statements. He said he would not volunteer any information but he would answer truthfully all the questions that we will ask," Lacson said.

But Lozada changed his mind when his name came out in the comparisons in the new Senate witness to the resumption of the inquiry into the ZTE deal, the senator said.

"He fears for his life," Lacson said.

Lozada's movements are reportedly being monitored by government agents. "They were checking his movements, telling him he went to those places just to impress on him that he is being watched," a source said.

Neri's close friend: consultant

Lozada is said to be an IT expert and close friend of Romulo Neri, former chief of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Lozada was designated by Neri to be his consultant in evaluating proposals for the NBN project, which sought to build a broadband network linking government agencies and local government units nationwide.

Lozada was tasked with assessing the ZTE proposal and later that of Amsterdam Holdings Inc. (AHI), a company headed by Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, son and namesake of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

AHI offered to undertake the project under a build-operate-transfer scheme, while ZTE sought to build the network using concessional loans from the Chinese government.

"He knows how the deal was cooked. (For) every piece of paper, every signature, the ZTE people paid," a friend of Lozada's, who declined to be named because of the sensitive nature of the matter, told the Inquirer yesterday.

"I heard (that the total take (of the people behind the deal) was $70 (million)," the source added.

A second source said Lozada knew how much of an "advance" (in millions of dollars) was given to Benjamin Abalos Sr., who denied brokering the deal but resigned on Oct. 1, 2007, as chairman-commissioner of the Comelec after De Venecia testified against him at the joint Senate investigations.

"He was confident that ZTE gave $5 million to Abalos as an advance," the source said.

At a Senate hearing last year, Neri described Abalos, then chair of the Commission on Elections, of offering him P200 million in exchange for his approval of the ZTE proposal.

Present at meetings

The first source said Lozada could also testify on the role of Arroyo's husband in the deal.

"He (Lozada) was present in almost all the meetings. He knows all the people involved," the first source said.

The second source said Lozada was hosted by Mike Arroyo during a golf game at the Manila Polo Golf and Country Club in Makati during Cory, the name of many ZTE executives from the Chinese firm also participated.

"Sibuli lang siya dito sa Asia, dito sa pag-aaya (He was not only bullied, but also upset)," the second source said.

For another source, who had spoken to Lozada, said the President's husband had "bullied" him at the Makati Shangri-La hotel.

The younger De Venecia told a Senate hearing last year that Mike Arroyo had thrown a fingers on him and told him to "back off" (stop pursuing the NBN project) during a meeting at Palacio Shangri-La, a meeting at Palacio Shangri-La, a meeting at Palacio Shangri-La,

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Finally, Pangasinan honors first senator

By Gabriel Cardenas
Urdaneta City

TO THE URDANETA CITY GOVernment, honoring an illustrious son was never too late. And on his 123rd birth anniversary on Jan. 18, city officials and residents gathered at a park to unveil a memorial for the late Sen. Pedro Ma. Sison, Pangasinan's first senator.

Mayor Amadeo Perez Jr. said the centennarian park, now known as the "Bahlikayan Park," would be renamed after Sison, a lifelong senator born still also be revered there.

SEN. Pedro Ma. Sison

The call for the first time that a public place in Pangasinan will be named after the late senator. "Personally, I'm both sad and happy [about the nomination], " said lawyer Luis Sison, the senator's grandson.

"[Sad] because it's only now that we are coming out with a tribute for our grandfather. I'm happy because Mayor Perez gave us this opportunity to create a memorial for Senator Sison," he said.

Like many people in the province, Luis said he did not know much about the life of his grandfather because even in their family, they did not talk much about him. It was only when he read a book written by an uncle, Pedro Ma. Sison Jr., that he learned about the senator's accomplishments as a public servant.

"I only learned of what he accomplished [from the book] and how his peers regarded him. In fact, Ulises Morales Peñaranda Manuel Quezon himself was a very close friend of Don[Pedro Ma. Sison]," Luis said.

Well-known lawyer

He said his grandfather was a practicing lawyer before he joined politics. "He was very well known as a lawyer. He served indigents, those who could not afford to hire lawyers. That's why he was a popular," he said.

The late senator also served in the provincial government as assistant treasurer during the American occupation.

Historian Ronnie Mendoza Cortes, in his book "Pangasinan 1901-1986: A Political, Socioeconomic and Cultural History," said Sison was first elected assemblyman in the 1931 elections, representing Pangasinan's fourth district that included Urdaneta, his birthplace.

With the passage of the Jones Law in 1916 that created a bicameral, all-Filipino legislature, Sison ran for senator and won, finishing first in the first senator from Pangasinan. He was reelected in 1919 and served until 1922.

Local historians mention Sison said Sison was one of the only two senators then who traveled to Washington D.C. to lobby for early Philippine independence. The Philippines then was an American colony following the defeat of the Spaniards.

Late senator, grandfather was among the first Filipinos who fought for women's suffrage in the halls of Congress. It was only in 1937 that Filipino women were allowed to vote.

Sison town

One of the memorable legislations that the late senator sponsored was the merger of two Spanish townships of Aliaro and Nitsitio into what is now known as Sison town (pop: 40,955) in northeastern Pangasinan.

But, here the town got its name had nothing historical accounts. According to Cortes, the town was named after Pacheco Sison, the first Pangasinan governor under the American regime.

The official website of the provincial government (http://www.pangasinan.gov.ph/municipalities.html) and Sison town (http://www.sisontourism.gov.ph/SISON/Default.html) however, said that when the resolution was approved by Congress, then American Governor General Leonard Wood declared that the fusion be made on May 1, 1918—and the town was named Sison after its sponsor, Senator Sison."

But according to Luis, other documents will prove that the town was named after his grandfather. He said former Sen. Nene Pimentel, now in his 80s, had convened an affidavit supporting Sison's claim.

"When my grandfather died [on June 12, 1958], one of those who spoke in the funeral was then Pangasinan Gov. Serafin[Sison de la Cruz. And he mentioned in his speech that Sison town was named after Sen. Pedro Ma. Sison," Luis said.

Youngest daughter

Only the late senator's youngest daughter, Ernesta Sison, attended the Urdaneta celebration on Jan. 18. Her only living brother, Jesus, is now bedridden. The late senator had nine children.

Luis said no one among the senator's descendants followed in his political footsteps. Three of the senator's sons, including Sison's father, Carlos, became lawyers. Among the grandchildren, only Luis became a lawyer.

"I'm the last lawyer in the Sison line and I don't have a child who is a lawyer. I'm old. I'm already 65, so when I die, there'll be no lawyer in one lineage," Luis said.

The late senator was also Mayor Perez's grandfather. Perez's grandmother, Bella Trinidad Sison, was the senator's niece.

DON Pedro Ma. Sison's youngest daughter, Ernesta Reyes (left), and Urdaneta City Mayor Amadeo Perez Jr. after [illegible] the unveiling of Sison's bust at the renaming of Bahlikayan Park into the Don Pedro Sison Park in Urdaneta.

First locally translated Bible in Pangasinan language

By Yolanda Sarmiento Fuentes
Urdaneta City

WHEN COPIES OF THE BIBLE were distributed in Urdaneta City on Jan. 21 in celebration of National Bible Week, the people of Pangasinan had a reason to feel special. The first Philippine language into which God's Word was translated was Pangasinan.

Copies of God's Word were distributed in Urdaneta during Nat'l Bible Week celebration

According to the 1998 book, "A Century of Bible Christians in the Philippines," edited by Dr. Anne Brunstetter, the first Bible book translated into the local language (Pangasinan) was the Gospel of Luke.

The translator was done in 1879 by Protestant priest Mardan Mantapor Alonzo Lallave and was published in London in 1887. Eventually Lallave, who was assigned to Urdaneta, translated the New Testament into Pangasinan, except the Book of Revelation.

Swanson and her Canadian husband are missionaries with the Christian Reformed World Mission. She studied Protestant history in the Philippines and now teaches Asian Church and Missions History at the Asian Theological Seminary in Quezon City.

"Records of the American Bible Society showed that in 1820, several Bibles were given to someone on his way to the Philippines [but] nobody [knew] what happened to these Bibles. The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) also sent Bibles to Manila, some of which were sent to the provinces," Swanson said in her book.

Secret distribution

Bible distribution at that time was done secretly, she said, because the Spanish Roman Catholic government in Manila actively forbade the reading of the Scriptures. People caught with the books were arrested, imprisoned or sent to exile, she said.

"[Some] Bibles, which made their way past customs officials, ended up in Pangasinan in 1871," Swanson said.

Lallave received a Bible copy from an English ship captain and, knowing some English, he read it late at night and compared it with the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

"It cannot be verified if he continued to his parishioners that he had been reading in his coffee churches of the Bible, but he discovered it as the purest spring of eternal truth," Swanson said.

Lallave promoted as dissidents Bible copies to the people in their own languages. He and three of his colleagues found it difficult to remain missionary priests of the Roman Catholic Church and applied for release from their vows.

At that time, political conditions in the Philippines were fast changing. Conscientious Spanish officials viewed as treason the least priests' actions and ordered them arrested, imprisoned and deported to Spain.

Back in Spain, Lallave became a Protestant pastor, got married and had children. But he did not forget the people of Pangasinan and started translating the Gospel of Luke for his former parishioners. This became the first Scripture portion in the Philippine language.

Swanson said Lallave continued his work until he completed the New Testament (except Revelation).

In 1889, when Lallave was 36 years old, he returned to Asia, accompanied by a Filipino friend, Francisco Castrillo, a fellow pastor. They boarded a ship for Manila, carrying two crates of boxes and Acts in Pangasinan and Ilocano. They also hid candles there (weeks before Bible copies in Spanish), a Spanish New Testament, and a Chinese Bible.

Bookstore project

The two wanted to set up a bookstore in Manila, but it was the time of the Propaganda Movement and the Spanish government was wary of subversive activities that might challenge its rule. The mates were eventually seized and the senators of a person for the bookstore was delayed.

Lallave and Castrillo checked into the newly opened Hotel de Oriente. There, they suffered from deliberate food poisoning, according to Swanson. Lallave died on June 1, 1889, and was buried at the British consulary in Makati, on the request of Castrillo.

Left alone, Castrillo asked for a permit to start selling books, but authorities accused him of espionage and detained him. He was released two days later, thanks to the intervention of the British consul in Manila.

Castrillo was told to leave the country in exchange for the dropping of charges against him. When he left, he reclaimed the two undamaged crates and brought them to Singapore.

Return of the crates

When the Spaniards were defeated by the Americans in 1898, Charles Randall of the BFBS for South China arrived in Manila from Singapore. He met with Charles Rhea and Frank Jackson, who worked for the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and told them of Castrillo's story.

Randall brought with him the two crates that Castrillo took to Singapore nine years earlier. Together with Rhea and Jackson, he boarded the train for Dagupan to distribute the translated Bible copies.

"Along the way, in Pangasinan towns, they began to hand over the books to the train minister. They were nodded upon their arrival in Dagupan, carried the boxes to a nearby nipa nipa shed by a Chinese," Swanson said.

"There, then behind a metal window grill of the store, they distributed the remainder of the 1,200 copies of the Gospels to their customers and "touched the people of Pangasinan," she said.

Across the NATION

Manero return to hometown filled with anxiety, joy

HOME COMING for prize rider Manero Manero

DINALUPIHAN—ANXIETY, THEN relief was pictured on the face of Norberto Manero, the year-end award of lifting Indian prime Tabo Bendi in 1995, as he walked out of the arrival area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to meet relatives and friends.

But a perceptible change could be felt of Manero.

"Life in prison is no different from life of freedom," he said. "All I want to do is to go back to a normal life, reestablish connection, live in peace."

Manero said he wanted nothing else but to live with his family and friends again.

Manero said he was renewing a 2001 pact he signed with Italian priest Fr. Peter Geremich of the Italy-based Pontifical Institute of Foreign Mission to prove that he would no longer return to the violent life he had in the 1990s.

It was Geremich, not Bendi, who was Manero's target.

Manero reunited with his wife, Evelyn, and was met by relatives and his lawyer, Norma Sendiong.

They proceeded to Tubinan, North Cotabato, where the whole Manero clan awaited a reunion and celebration.

His brother, Joe, a retired soldier, said he was glad that his brother was finally free.

"We have so many things we have to catch up on," he said. "My mother and father had died, and there my wife died, without him having seen them."

Manero entered into the pact with Geremich promising never to set up another cult and be send again by politicians.

Manero's arrival drew mixed reactions among people who gathered at the airport.

Taxi driver Edgar Bonello, 37, said he was happy that Manero was free. He said he was once a member of an Ilaga group that was headed by Manero. Germelino Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao

Chinese-Filipino store owner in Jolo kidnapped

JOLO, SULU—GUNmen snatched a Chinese-Filipino businesswoman here on Monday, police said.

Senior Supt. Julkanien Kasim, provincial police chief, said Bernalie Lao, 58, was on her way home from her store when abducted near Kalingayan Village.

Police dispatched a police Toyota raw van that the abductors used but lost track of it near Barangay Datag in Patikul town, said Senior Insp. Usman Pingay, town police chief.

Pingay said the kidnappers had not yet contacted the family.

Lao comes a close at the Sharif Trade Center.

In Bongao, Tawi-tawi, killers of Orbita prize Reynaldo Ibida have demanded P1 million in exchange for the release of a teacher they abducted during the killing.

Supt. Nasserajah Taup, Tawi-tawi police chief, said the slain Sayyid had sent him a ransom note asking for P1 million for the release of Omar Iraup.

Omar was taken at the gunmen fled after shooting and killing Ibida on Jan. 15.

Taup said the victim, a distant relative of his, was "waging war to produce the ransom."

"But we will not pay up," the officer said.

In Cotabato City police said More Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels kidnapped three persons in Maimbung town, Sulu @ Agusan, on June 24.

Supt. Danilo Baran, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division in Muslim Mindanao police, identified the victims as Christopher Lumigo, 29, Jeffrey Bocero, 31, and Ruth Bardia, 30, all of Cotabato City.

The victims, he said, were selling frozen foods manufactured by Scotia Philippines when taken by the MILF rebels in Barangay Tukanalipao at around 9 a.m.

Eid Kabalu, MILF civil military affairs chief, said the victims were "just invited" for questioning after MILF rebels suspected that they were military agents.

The victims were eventually freed, he said. "They were unharmed and no ransom was asked before they were turned over to the IMT (International Monitoring Team)."

The family of engineer Mariel Tagaitis, who went missing in Jolo on Oct. 30, has filed a suit of amparo against the military and police in Cotabato City.

Tagaitis, who works for a project funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) of Jeddah, was earlier thought to have been abducted by Abu Sayyaf bandits.

A few weeks after his disappearance, Datu Gov. Abdusakur Tan said Tagaitis' abduction appeared to be fake. He said the missing engineer could have stolen funds related to his work with the IDB.

But the Tagaitis family said they believed he was being held by unidentified armed men. Kimitu pehl. Ed Gerard, Edwin Fernandez and Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

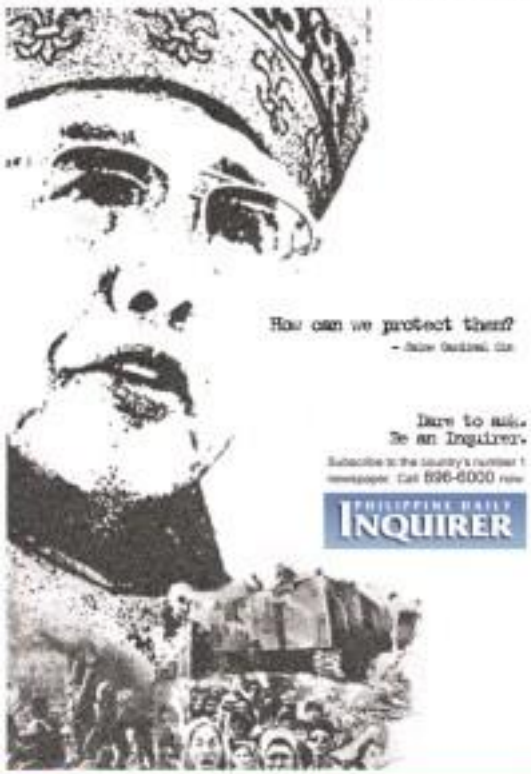
Enrollment in agri, fishery courses down

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—THE province may depend on agriculture and fisheries, but enrollment in programs related to these fields in the Pangasinan State University (PSU) has been declining in the past years.

PSU president Victorino Aquino said enrollment to fishery courses was dropping by 2 percent yearly and in agriculture, by 5 percent.

"It is the trend in all other agriculture colleges and universities, including the University of the Philippines Los Baños and Central Luzon State University," he said.

Aquino said he enrollment in Binmaley dropped from 242 in 2000 to 221 this school year. Students taking up agriculture in Binmaley, down from 762 in the previous school year, he said. Yolanda Sotelo Puertos, Inquirer Northern Luzon



Cops nab 12, seize illegal lumber

KIDAPAWAN—GUN-runner operations seized 76 pieces of illegally cut red lauan lumber worth P1.1 million in the coastal town of Hinatuan, Quezon, early yesterday.

Senior Supt. Hermelo Zuñiga, Quezon police chief, said the 403rd Provincial Police Mobile Group based in Gumaca were received a text message that illegal lumber gunrunners were in the embankment in the village of Tamisan in Hinatuan town, facing Lamon Bay.

A team led by Supt. Benigno Gatdula of the 403rd PPMG arrested 12 people, all residents of Mauban while they loaded the lumber into an Isuzu Forward truck (NFD6-520) registered in the Lingayden Jaime of Barangay Tagum, Candelaria, Quezon.

The confiscated forest products have an estimated volume of 7,219 board feet, police said.

Zuñiga said the forest products were unlawfully cut in the Sierra Madre and transported to Hinatuan to be sold.

A police report identified the suspected owners of the cargo as Jerry and Rosalyn Barangan, alleged leaders of illegal loggers from Mauban. Joffly T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau

Newsbriefs

15 Hajj well-wishers die in jeep crash

CURIMAO CITY—A jeep carrying well-wishers of Hajj pilgrims collided with a truck in Curimao, North Cotabato, yesterday, killing 15 people and injuring several others, police said.

Insp. Reynaldo Subico, Curimao police chief, said the jeep, headed for Pinang, Maguindanao, overturned the truck on a sharp curve in Barangay General Luna at around 11 a.m.

The jeep went out of control and slammed into the 10-wheel truck.

The driver of the jeep's passengers and the driver lay dead on the road, while two others died on the hospital.

The injured, some of them in critical condition, were taken to hospitals.

The truck driver surrendered to police.

Mary Arvate, Carmen social welfare chief, said only nine of the victims, including the driver, had been identified. They were identified Rahman Ebrao Sadula, Mohamad Sadula, Lugaya Mastain, Amil Sapal, Obayda Sadiagan, Mohaipha Asim and Tong Sadula.

Arvate said four of those who died on the spot were children aged 2 to 5 years. They remained unidentified as of press time.

Edwin O. Fernandez with a report from Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

Leyte plays host to 4,000 scouts

BALEN CITY—The city and provincial government will host for the first time at least 4,000 scouts from Eastern Visayas at the 13th Regional Boy Scout Jamboree, which starts today.

Thousands of scouts and delegates will converge for five days at the sprawling 400-hectare open-world named Danao Forest Park, an upland park 15 kilometers from downtown.

Jaci Arcal, Inquirer Visayas

Ex-congressman dies of heart attack

CEBU CITY—A former Cebuano congressman died of a heart attack shortly after he and his family arrived home here from a funeral in Dumaguete City on Monday.

Cinsilagan Alonso, 68, suffered a heart attack minutes after arriving at his home in Barangay Lahug, according to lawyer Frank Mallong, his business legal counsel.

Mallong said Alonso fell while climbing the stairs of his house.

Alonso was brought to the Cebu Doctors' University Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

NPAs suspected in burning of posts

CEBU CITY—Seventeen towers and a city in southern Cebu went without power starting 6:40 p.m. on Monday after unidentified men torched an electric post of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) in San Fernando town.

Ben Yeti, Transco spokesperson, said power was restored by noon.

Lt. Col. Jefferson Gmandam, Armed Forces of the Philippines' Central Command spokesperson, said the NPA could be behind the attack.

The rebels, he said, had been demanding loans from Transco.

Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

Fire destroys 39 houses; 1 hurt

TACLOBAN CITY—Fire in a storm area here destroyed 39 houses and left over 200 people homeless on Monday, fire investigators said.

SFO1 Gregorio de Guzman said the fire was believed to have started at the house of one Ricardo Bautista.

De Guzman quoted witnesses as saying the fire was caused by a gasoline that was left unattended.

Bautista suffered burns in the shoulder and left arm.

Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

Arab funds looking for RP investments

By Doris C. Dumlao

LARGE SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS from the oil-rich Middle East are scouting for opportunities to invest their petrodollars in the Philippines.

In a press briefing yesterday, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and Dubai Development and Investment Authority, among other state-owned investment funds from the Gulf, indicated their intentions to invest in the country during President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent visit to Dubai.

Areas of interest

Tetangco, who was part of the presidential delegation in Dubai, did not specify areas of interest for the Middle East investment funds were real estate, tourism development, infrastructure, mining and even Islamic banking.

"There was a really great deal of interest," Tetangco said.

Rising wealth in the Middle East, given skyrocketing oil prices, has boosted the appetite of these investment funds to bring their presidents abroad.

Largest oil producer

Tetangco noted that Abu Dhabi Investment, for instance, was the same fund that recently invested $7.5 billion in American banking giant Citigroup.

Abu Dhabi is the largest of producers of the seven emirates of the United Arab Emirates and the Abu Dhabi Investment is the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world with assets estimated at $600 billion.

"They recognize that the Philippines has shown remarkable progress and they are looking for areas where they can invest ... as the government will have to follow no there. There are big investors," he said.

In 2007, the domestic economy grew by almost 7 percent, its best performance in about 30 years.

The BSP chief said Al-Amanah bank, the country's first and only Islamic bank now being managed by the Development Bank of the Philippines, was specifically mentioned by potential investors.

Islamic banking

Islamic banking is a type of banking that conforms to the Koran which in turn prohibits the charging of interest. Instead, the bank provides funding like an equity investor that shares in the profits or losses of an enterprise. Financing is structured like lease-to-own arrangements, layaway plans, joint purchases and sale agreements, or partnerships.

Al-Amanah Bank's mandate is to promote and accelerate the socioeconomic development of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao by providing banking, financing and investment operations.

Gaining huge attention

Islamic banking is recently gaining huge attention even in the world's large financial capitals like New York, London, Tokyo and London. About 300 Islamic financial institutions hold at least $500 billion in assets and further increasing by about 10 percent each year.

"We told them that we are taking advantage of ample liquidity to boost infrastructure," Tetangco said.

"This is the time to use this liquidity, to think of new funding structures that will benefit infrastructure," he said.

DMIA to be RP's premier airport

VERY SOON, THE COUNTRY'S PREMIER airport will no longer be the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. It will be the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday gave instructions to her officials to pave the way for the international airport named after her late father, former President Diosdado Macapagal, to be the premier airport of the country.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo said that the President made the directive based on the recommendation by a team from the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Department of Tourism.

Fajardo said aside from these government agencies, the private sector that included businessmen in Pampanga and Subic, Zambales were pushing for the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport to be named the premier airport of the country.

Fajardo said that this change was being sought because Naia had become so congested in the past that incoming airplanes would have to fly around 30 minutes before they could land because of the heavy traffic.

Christine O. Avendaño

Migrant group raps financial program for OFWs

By Jeremy Aning

"DRASTIC AND DISCRIMINATORY" was how a Filipino migrants group in the Middle East has described the financial program launched by President Macapagal-Arroyo in the United Arab Emirates over the weekend.

The program, including a hedging facility, is aimed at preserving the value of the remittances overseas Filipino workers send to their loved ones in the Philippines in the wake of the declining value of the US dollar against the peso.

"This hedging [facility] they launched only shows the administration is not aware of our real situations," said Migrante-UAE secretary general Mike Morona in a statement from Dubai.

Morona said that most OFWs in the Middle East earned an average of $500 a month. Under the hedge fund, or be managed by the Development Bank of the Philippines, a minimum $10,000 is needed to avail oneself of a favorable peso-dollar exchange rate.

Migrante instead called for the lowering of the prices of basic commodities in the Philippines, more subsidized college education, and the scrapping of the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) to stem the rising cost of living of OFWs' families due to the rising foreign exchange rate.

"Six months here we work 24 hours a day, we can never get the losses ending in three months," Morona said.

The story fee is actually $1,000 (lowered from the $10,000 minimum during the conceptualization of the project), according to BSP president and CEO Reynaldo David.

The minimum amount eligible is since his one of the OFW's hedging products is $1,000 which can be insured for one month, three months or six months at the client's desired exchange rate, David said at a forum for OFWs in Hong Kong recently.

If, for instance, a client wants to fix his remittance at an exchange rate of 49.45 in six months, he enters into an insurance protection contract with DBP. If after six months, the peso appreciates to 38, he will still get the 49 exchange rate when he remits.

"But let's say after six months, the rate is 45, then they don't need to sell it so and they can sell in the market. So, they have an upside," David explained. With a report from Perla C. Bautista

SWISS WATCH
PAWNSHOP

Poverty up at UP centennial lectures

ECONOMICS SCHOLARS OF THE UNIVERsity of the Philippines will tackle the issues of poverty and poverty alleviation at a milestone UP Centennial activity at 2 p.m. tomorrow at the Ishmael Auditorium in UP Diliman.

"Poverty: Facts, Theories, and Remedies: A Centennial Conversation" will feature the studies of professors of the UP School of Economics (UPSE) as part of the UP Centennial Lecture Series, the cornerstone of the university's celebration of its 100 years.

The third in the lecture series will be convened by Dr. Raul V. Fabella, former UPSE dean.

Dr. Jesusa M. Baldemor, concurrently executive director of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, will lecture on "What We Know and Don't," Dr. Dante B. Canlas on "Why the Poor Remain Poor," and Fabella on "Globalization and Governance: Do They Matter?"

Ed. cela Torre, president of the Education for Life Foundation, Victoria Garchitorena, president of Ayala Foundation, and Dolores de Quiros Castillo, assistant secretary of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, will serve as reactors.

The UPSE has been a premier source of scholarly perspectives on the Philippines' economic situation. At least four of its faculty members have been chiefs of the National Economic and Development Authority.

The first two lectures in the UP Centennial Lecture Series were "The Lessons of Science" delivered by Dr. David J. Gross, Nobel Prize winner for physics (Jan. 9), and "From Cosmic Strings to Strings in Drugs: The Scientific Odyssey of a UP Graduate" delivered by Dr. Baldemore M. Olivos, UP alumnus and 2007 Harvard Foundation Scientist of the Year (Jan. 16).

UP conferred upon Gross and Olivos the degree of doctor of science, honoris causa, before their lectures.

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Editor Ester C. Dipasupil

Rally greets int'l derby

Animal rights group protests cockfights

By Marlon Ramos

SECURITY personnel of the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City drive away a man dressed as a chicken and other animal rights activists protesting a cockfighting event at the Araneta Coliseum. RAUL PANGALANGAN

RESIDENTS OF THE ARANETA Center in Cubao, Quezon City neared a stir among shoppers yesterday when they prevented three animal rights activists, including a man in a chicken costume, from protesting the holding of a four-day international cockfighting derby that opened yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Get away from here. You have no permit. What you're doing is wrong," one of the guards told members of the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta).

At least three other guards secured the protesters and grabbed their placards which read "Small roosters have little brains. Raise cockfighting" in Filipino.

The guards then dragged the activists out of the commercial center

MARLON RAMOS

2 dead in Tondo fire; ₱3.5M lost in Makati blaze

By Tina G. Santos and DJ Yap

TWO PERSONS WERE KILLED while millions worth of scuba diving equipment were destroyed when fires broke out in Tondo, Manila, and Makati City on Monday night.

Killed in the Tondo fire was Rolando Sardalan, 36, a janitor who worked at the Manila Bulletin, and his granddaughter, Spirit Jane, 4.

SFO2 Emmanuel Gaspar of the Manila Fire District said the fire started at around 11:30 p.m. in Sardalan's house on San Bartolome Street.

Fire officials said they were looking into reports that the blaze was caused by an unattended candle because the electricity to Sardalan's house had been cut off.

In Makati City, some ₱3.5 million worth of scuba diving equipment went up in smoke Monday night after a four-hour fire razed a warehouse. Nobody was hurt in the incident.

The blaze struck the warehouse of Scuba World on Kalayaan Street in Barangay Sta. Cruz at a little past 8 p.m., senior investigators said.

It destroyed stocks of scuba diving equipment such as diving suits, flippers, snorkels and even oxygen tanks and air compressors, said FO1 Christina Maria Catelino.

Responding firefighters quickly put the fire under control, but after it spread but it continued to rage until midnight, Catelino added. Investigators have not yet been able to determine the cause of the fire.

TNT found near bus terminal

By Julie M. Aurelio

TWO SUSPECTED TERRORISTS, later popularly known as TNT, a type of high-explosive chemical, and blasting caps were uncovered by the police Monday night inside a shuttle van at the Philtranco Bus Terminal in Apelo Street in Malibay, Pasay City.

Authorities, however, have yet to determine why the explosives were left behind and who placed them near the terminal.

"We still don't know the motive or the source of these explosives. You have not received any intelligence reports of a terror threat," said Senior Supt. Manferio Balatio, city police chief.

If detonated, the explosives could bring down a building, he added.

A Special Weapons and Tactics team led by Senior Insp. Lorjen Flaviar went to Apelo Street at 3 a.m. yesterday after Michael del Rosario, Barangay 112 chair, called them up to say that a resident found explosives inside a van of paint.

Florida Angeles, 52, told the police that she saw a can of paint containing leftover and an unwanted 1.5 p.m. Monday. She added that she took the can home and dumped its contents into the open manhole near the bus terminal.

Fifteen she peered into the manhole. Angeles said she saw the explosives. She immediately reported her find to the barangay official.

She recovered were six commercial nonelectrical fuses measuring five feet each, blasting caps and match sticks.

DID YOU KNOW

THE LATE National Artist Pablo Antonio was born on Jan. 26, 1902 in Binondo, Manila. The architect was known for designing the far-Eastern University building on Quezon Avenue in Manila and the Manila Polo Club in Makati City. He was named National Artist in 1976, a year after his death.

Cyril L. Pasadenia, Inquirer Research

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8 car theft suspects nabbed, released later

Rally greets int'l derby

From page A1

while observers tried to prevent the media from taking pictures of the incident.

Most 10 minutes, the 1866 members, including the man in the chicken costume, decided to leave the area.

A guard who declined to give his name told reporters that the rally was illegal as it was held within private property.

"They did not have any permit from the management. They don't have any right to hold their rally here," he said.

Francis Anthony Bugarin, 36, a campaigner, said the protest was part of their crusade to outlaw cockfighting in the country.

He added that they intentionally launched the campaign at the start of the "World Sbabet Cup," said to be the biggest cockfighting event in the world, to educate foreigners from having said cruel to animals," he said.

Jemilyn Tagnao, another PeTA campaigner, assailed game fowl breeders who, she said, claim that cockfighting is part of the Filipino culture.

No excuse

"Cruelty is not an excuse for tradition. They have animals to fight against each other," she said.

The heavens tried to get in side the coliseum to get the wrath of organizers of the cockfighting derby, but was refused entry by security personnel.

In its website, PeTA said the Philippines is among the few countries in the world which have yet to outlaw cockfighting.

It said that in the US, only the state of Louisiana allows cockfighting.

By Marlon Ramos

ANTICAR THEFT AGENTS arrested eight men in Quezon City just before midnight Monday. Hours after they reportedly stole a van loaded with car engines from a warehouse in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija.

The arrested men, however, were later released after the owner of the vehicle, Edna Cipriano, turned out to be the mother of one of the suspects.

SPO2 Norman Siow, investigator of the Anti-Carnapping (Anticar) Unit of the Quezon City Police District, said Cipriano decided not to file a complaint against her son, Gilbo, 30, and his seven companions.

"Apparently the complainant and her son had a problem about money. Cipriano didn't know it was her son who took the vehicle and its contents from their house in Nueva Ecija," Siow told the reporter.

Apart from the younger Cipriano, also arrested were Rodolfo Austria, 41; Joy Labasco, 24; Antonio Pedido, 34; Eduardo Mendoza, 45; Reginio Alonzo, 45; Santiago Diamante, 54; and Randy Bitacuap, 30.

Siow said security personnel of the North Luzon Expressway sought their assistance after they received information that a stolen vehicle had entered the expressway. He said the NLEX identified the eight as suspected car thieves.

Together with NLEX and QCPD Station 1 operatives, Siow's agents immediately set up a road block at the corner of C-5 Road and Bonifacio Drive in Barangay Bagumbayan and flagged down the Mitsubishi Canter (STE 580) van, with Gilbo behind the wheel, at 11:50 p.m. Monday.

Siow said they also intercepted a passenger jeep (STN 548) carrying the other suspects.

He added that Gilbo was planning to sell the contents of the vehicle to dealers of car spare parts in Quezon City.

METROBRIEFS

Hospitalized, not jailed

THE POLICE tried yesterday to arrest the Pasay City administrator on the strength of a warrant issued by a Marawi City judge but failed to do so after she was hospitalized for hypertension. Members of the Southern Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Group attempted to serve the warrant on Emestina Cariaga for alleged irregularities allegedly committed by her in the Marawi City Radio Station by re- fore when Cariaga complained of dizziness, a doctor who was called examined her that her blood pressure had shot up to 180/120, prompting them to take her to the Pasay City General Hospital. Cariaga was later placed under the custody of Senior Supt. Marietta Rabero, Pasay police chief. "She'll stay in the hospital. Let them try (to arrest her). They will have to pay if something happens to her," Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad said. He added that his wife, Stella, who was also arrested by the same warrant, was not arrested because her name was misspelled. "This is just political harassment," the mayor said.

BJ Pye

WorldBriefs

Gunmen free 300 children

PESHAWAR — Heavily armed militant militants took more than 300 children hostage in a school in northwestern Pakistan on Monday, but freed them after two negotiators with the militants, officials said. Seven rebels equipped with rocket launchers and dynamite broke up at the primary school in the remote village of Dosalai after a failed attempt to abduct a local official and left one of their men dead, they said. "The insurgents threatened to blow up the children if they were not given safe passage, but eventually released them unharmed," Khushal Khattak, the district chief police officer, told Agence France-Presse. No one claimed responsibility for the attack. AFP

50 sea lions massacred

SEATTLE — Canadian authorities are investigating the massacre of 53 sea lions that were found with a violent skull to the Galapagos Islands, the endangered animal's official conservation body. The dead animals were in an advanced stage of decomposition when they were discovered on the island of Pinta, southwest in a one-kilometre radius, said Galapagos National Park official Victor Carrion. "The sea lions, including 13 pups, died this season of a strong blow from someone. It was a massacre," he said. Carrion told AFP. The animals' remains did not appear to have been molested, and no one were found on their shore or bodies, he said. AFP

French aid workers jailed

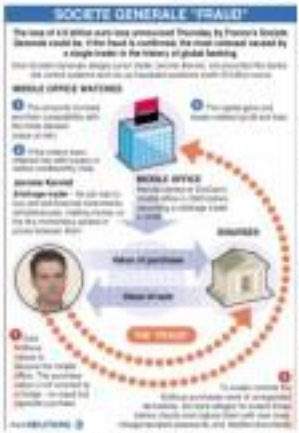
CHITRAL, France — A French court on Monday sentenced six charity workers to eight years in prison, after they were convicted in Chad of trying to abduct more than 100 children from the border with eastern Darfur. The Eurotin said. Two members of French charity Zoe's Ark were sentenced to hard labour for life in Chad and could face charges of attempted kidnapping, but were later repatriated to France where no cases pending arrest. Angry shouts broke out in court as the defendants were read out, while the aid workers' families and friends attending the judgment "criminals" and "bastards." AFP

Sharon's son to be jailed

JERUSALEM — Ariel Sharon's son faces charges to jail for corruption next month, on the day the controversial ex-war prime minister turns 80, reports Agence France-Presse. Gilad Sharon, the Justice Ministry spokesperson said judges rejected Gilad Sharon's appeal against a sentence for fraudulently raising campaign funds for his father. Israel's courts said that must be issued begin his sentence would be on Feb. 27. The 42-year-old businessman was convicted over corruption linked to 2002 after the elder Sharon was forced from office by a massive alcohol that plunged Israel into a crisis. He appealed his sentence, saying the loss of his parliamentary seat was punishment enough. Reuters

Missile strike kills 12

ISLAMABAD — At least 12 people were killed in a suspected missile strike in Pakistan's troubled tribal region of South Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan, local officials said on Tuesday. Intelligence officials said the dead were pro-Taliban militants, but residents said they were innocent villagers in the house of a locksmith at Khaisor Tor Khel, a village on the outskirts of the town of Mir Ali. "A missile came from an unknown direction on Monday night and hit the house, after which 12 people have died," a local administration official said. AFP



Iran warns of serious consequences if UN adopts new sanctions

TEHRAN — IRAN WARNED ON MONDAY of "serious consequences" as the UN Security Council weighed a package of new sanctions against Tehran over its refusal to halt sensitive nuclear fuel work.

"If [confrontation] persist[...], it will have serious and high-risk consequences and one will undermine them [not]," Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told a press conference. His comments came as the Security Council held informal talks in Britain's UN mission in New York to oversee a proposed third set of sanctions over Tehran's refusal to halt sensitive work. Russia, which has confirmed the final delivery of fuel for Iran's first nuclear power plant.

The sanctions package was agreed last week by foreign ministers of the council's five veto-wielding permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany.

It is meant to force the hand of a third issue of economic and trade sanctions against Iran for defying Security Council demands to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. But the West fears could be used to make a nuclear bomb.

In Washington, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Monday that a new UN resolution against Iran should deepen current concerns and could pave the way for other actions over its nuclear program.

Asked if the new instrument out in Germany last week fell short of US requirements, she replied it was "no secret that a resolution of that kind is a negotiated product" that no one has deliberate views.

"The important thing is that it both deepens ... consistent against Iran and opens the possibility of new directions, like for instance the possibility of steps in opportunities," Rice told a press conference with Iran written Foreign Minister Stephen Smith.

The Islamic Republic insists its nuclear program is peaceful and aims at generating electricity. It also argues it has the right to produce uranium on its territory as a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. AFP

France's rogue trader freed on bail

PARIS — ACCUSED FRENCH ROGUE trader Jerome Kerviel walked free after judges placed him under formal investigation Monday for his role in seven billion dollars of losses at Societe Generale that snapped shares of the ailing bank south Israel.

Shares in the French banking giant rebounded after its subpoena announced that a board member was guilty of insider trading related to the scandal.

Kerviel was freed on bail after being placed under formal investigation for "breach of trust," "falsifying and using falsified documents," and "breaching IT procedures," said his lawyer Elisabeth Mayer.

Judges rejected a bid to charge Kerviel, arrested by the French banking giant of losing $7.21 billion, with the more serious crimes of "grave breach of trust" and "attempted fraud."

"It's a great victory," Mayer said. "But it's only justice being done."

Kerviel, 31, who had been in police custody for more than 48 hours, walked free Monday after being told not to communicate with Societe Generale employees or to work in any financial services capacity and he came non-custodial.

But no sooner had the "rogue trader" landed—over his passport—which meant not to have required one, were—then prosecutors lodged an appeal against his release.

The backdrop of a formal investigation in France does not necessarily mean that a trial will follow.

If found guilty of breach of trust, Kerviel would face a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a fine of $544,117, but then half of what he might have faced if fraud charges had been laid against him.

President Nicolas Sarkozy had earlier warned there must be consequences for those responsible for the scandal, rushing Societe Generale bosses, whose offer, ignoring his request last week, Sarkozy to the line of fire.

"When there is a system of this nature, it means systems without consequences in terms of responsibility," Sarkozy said.

Societe Generale shares had already plunged in recent percent on 600 euros in morning trading, its lowest level since mid-2006.

Boston went to London as a bid to shore up investor support for a proposed $8.1 billion capital increase to cover the trading losses and $2.05 billion of losses in the US sub-prime market. AFP

US envoy found dead in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — A US DIPLOMAT was found dead at his home in the Pakistani capital on Monday after apparently shooting himself in the head, police said.

The US embassy in Islamabad named the 57-year-old official as Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement Attache Kenth Pinto and said in a statement that his family would be informed.

"He was found dead in his home. A bullet hit his head," a Pakistani investigation official said. "Apparently he committed suicide, but we are investigating from all possible angles."

Officials from the US embassy and medical teams arrived at the scene before police were informed when a suspected suicide.

"Our colleague, Mr. Kenth Pinto, passed away this morning in Islamabad," the US statement said, without mentioning the cause of death.

"There will be a full investigation, however, there does not appear to have been any foul play," it said. AFP

Indonesia's Suharto buried like a king

JAKARTA, INDONESIA — INDONESIA'S former strongman Suharto, who buried yesterday in a family mausoleum near here with a military honor guard, Islamic prayers and an overlay of the national flag from the man of a king.

Twenty-three hours after his death in Jakarta following a three-week hospitalization, Suharto's coffin was lowered into the ground in a crypt on a sacred ceremonial site outside Solo, beside the tombs of his wife, Siti Hartinah, and of three other relatives.

Soon afterward, the sky over the mausoleum opened in a tremendous thunderstorm, ramping for the death of a fallen leader, in the belief of Javanese mysticism.

The funeral was organized and led by Suharto's family, who have been driven from office 10 years ago by rioting, demonstrations and a recession by his military chief and selected successor.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who was a high-ranking general in the time of the coups, flew here this day morning with Suharto family members, ministers, and government officials in a small fleet of military aircraft.

During his 32-year rule, Suharto arrested dissent with the iron fists used by his mentor Sukarno, who first ruled Indonesia by force and fear, and was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

Standing in a microphone, the Suharto eldest daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, offered an apology for what she called her father's mistakes, as she had Sunday when his death was announced.

Then, addressing him directly, she said: "Truly God can repay you for your goodness. Farewell, father. We send our prayers." PST

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Casino

Kennedy, Morrison endorse Obama's US presidency bid

WASHINGTON—US SEN. Edward Kennedy, a Democratic icon and a leading liberal voice, endorsed Barack Obama on Monday for the party's presidential nomination and called the young lawmaker an inspirational uniter.

"He is tough-minded but he also has an uncommon capacity to appeal to the better angels of our nature," Kennedy said, quoting from President Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address in 1861.

Kennedy, flanked by Obama at an early-morning rally of several thousand people at Silverado University, said, "Every time I've been asked over the past year who I would support in the Democratic primary, my answer has always been the same: I'll support the candidate who inspires me, who inspires all of us."

Kennedy invoked the memory of his brothers, the slain President John Kennedy, and was joined onstage by the late president's daughter, Caroline, and his own son, US Rep. Patrick Kennedy, in backing Obama, the 46-year-old, first-term Illinois senator who could be the nation's first black president.

Supporters lined up for hours beforehand to see members of the nation's most famous political family embrace a candidate whose charisma and youth have drawn comparisons to John Kennedy.

Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York, Obama's chief rival, brushed off the Kennedy endorsement while aides noted other Kennedys have backed her in the party's presidential nomination in the November election.

"At the end of the day this is not about anyone else other than the candidates," Clinton said.

Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, who once dubbed Bill Clinton the "first black president," also endorsed Obama.

Saying it was the first time she had issued a public endorsement of a presidential candidate, Morrison wrote in a letter to the Illinois senator that neither his racial background nor his rival Clinton's gender were decisive factors in her decision.

Morrison said she chose to endorse Obama because it might help attract supporters and "this is one of those singular moments that nations ignore at their peril."

"I will not rehearse the multiple crises facing us, but of one thing I am certain: This opportunity for a national evolution (even revolution) will not come again soon, and I am convinced you are the person to capture it," she wrote.

Obama welcomed the endorsement. Reuters, AFP

KENNEDY

MORRISON

Bush commits $2B to climate change fund

WASHINGTON—"WE UNITED STATES WILL commit $2 billion over the next three years to a new international fund to promote clean energy technologies and fight climate change, President George W. Bush told Congress on Wednesday in his annual State of the Union speech.

"Let us create a new international clean technology fund, which will help developing nations like India and China make greater use of clean energy sources," Bush said.

He said the United States is committed to working with major economies and the United Nations to complete an international agreement that "has the potential to slow, stop and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases."

"This agreement will be effective only if it includes commitments by every major economy and gives none a free ride," Bush said. "The United States is committed to strengthening our energy security and confronting global climate change."

Delegates from the biggest greenhouse gas-polluting countries will meet this week in Hawaii to spur US negotiations for an international climate agreement by 2009 that would replace the carbon-capping Kyoto Protocol expiring in 2012.

The Bush administration rejects the Kyoto Protocol, saying it unfairly exempts developing countries from cutting emissions and could hurt the US economy. Bush issues voluntary measures and "aspirational goals" to limit climate change.

In response to Bush's speech, environmental groups called the president's voluntary efforts to curb global warming an old approach that would not work.

"In the fight against global warming, the answer is clear: The path to avoid catastrophic climate change starts with mandatory limits on global warming pollution ... a voluntary approach adds up to lots of rhetoric and little actual change," said the National Wildlife Federation. Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE
- Hornets fan streak, sting Nuggets /A27

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy B. Molmisa Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

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Tipon enjoys edge over Thai foe

Bronze could qualify RP pug for Olympics

By Recah Trinidad

BANGKOK—IT'S A TOSS-UP BUT IF BANtamweight Joan Tipon—as he claims—feels a lot better than when he lost best to Worapoj Petchkoom in Chicago last year, the lone Filipino left standing in our in the Olympic qualifier has an edge over his popular Thai rival.

Boxer or host in Bangkok

(CAPTION: Tipon fights Thai rival Worapoj Petchkoom (below) Friday for an outright Beijing berth.)

Petchkoom, 26, all-way medalist in the 2005 Athens Olympics, told the Bangkok Post yesterday he has been fighting only up to 75 percent of his total ability in the tournament here.

Tipon, 25, on the other hand, claims he feels something like his personal shaper and stronger since Petchkoom defeated him in the Chicago World Championship last October.

After a plain discernment, it would appear that Tipon is better by a few points in overall heft.

However, perseverance take the sideline when the arch rivals—who have split their two encounters—meet in the semifinal round of the Asian Olympic qualifier with the winner gaining an outright ticket to the Beijing Olympics.

The only, their semifinal clash on Friday is being touted as top candidate for fight of the tournament.

While Tipon has been left on his own, following the successive defeats of his four teammates, Petchkoom has two compatriots keeping him company in the Olympics.

But Thai fighters have already secured spots in the Beijing Games, while it's only light-flyweight Sarity Tulunasi, from among RP hopes, who has as he made it to the Olympics.

Outright Olympic berth

Originally, only the bantamweight finalists would advance to Beijing, but organizers opened an extra slot by giving the bronze medalists in the division an outright Olympic berth.

That means Tipon could afford to drop his rematch with Petchkoom, whom he had been in the 2006 Doha Asiad, and still shoot for the bronze and a pass to the Beijing Olympics.

But the naval Cebu resident from Talisay Negros Occidental, has refused to be distracted.

Tipon is determined to go all the way to the Olympics and his is big, for the sake, he said, of his three kids.

"Buwis makakilos siopa sa Sportsa (Just watch me on Friday)," Tipon said.

His ring rivalry with Petchkoom has also become personal, a sort of blood war.

No better than RP fighters

Tipon also wanted to show that Thai boxers are no better than Filipino fighters.

RP coach Pat Gaspi said on Monday the Tipon's chances against the Thai could rest on the judges' hairlines.

"It all depends on how they would score it," Gaspi said.

The Tipon-Petchkoom bout is a clash between clash who own strikin' build and sharp styles.

On the way to the semifinals, the Filipino drew a first-round bye, outboxed Asokore Abrahams Afghanistan, 13-2, on Saturday, and scored a related third-round stoppage of Pakistani Ali Muhammad (9:00.45, 23-11 on Monday.

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RP's top billiards players, managers forming group

REYES

ALCAPRO

By Ray Guanzon

THREE NEW FOUND UNITS IN THE billiards hom

to co-effort to promote their ranks and keep the sport's lofty status, the country's top players and their managers have formed the Billiards Managers and Players Association of the Philippines (BMPAP).

The organization's prime movers are businessmen and player managers Antonio "Finch" Picazo, Jerry Martinez, Arendain Syquia/Valerie Reyes.

Picazo manages Hall of Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes, former world champion Alex Pagulayan and former world No.1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

Martinez heads Sugar Promotions, which has a stable of star players led by former double world champion Ronnie Alcano, 2003 World Pool Championship runner-up Rubenio Gomez, Asian Games gold medalist Antonio Gabica and other medalists Jeff de Luna as well as former World Pool League rider Bonnie Tan-dy.

By leads the rising Negros Billiards Stable, which has reigning national champion Lee Van Corteza and veteran internationalist Rodolfo Luat on its fold.

Reyes, on the other hand, handles former World Juniors campaigners Ronnie David and other rising players.

Picazo said the BMPAP will complement the programs of the billiards and Bowling Congress of the Philippines, the sport's national sports association.

"Just like in basketball, where the handshaking Basketball ng Pilipinas taps the services of the PBA whenever it wants to send the best team to international competitions," said Picazo. "Here, the BPPAP is more than willing to lend its top players to the national team."

"Our organization will help keep the Philippines tag as the world's epicenter of billiards, the home of the world's best cue-artists," said Martinez.

According to Martinez, the BMPAP will coordinate with the Games and Amusements Board because of the player's status as professional athletes.

Hot Giants, Aces gun for 2-0 leads

RYAN GREGORIO AND TIM CONE CAN TRY TO DOWNPLAY THEIR RESpective team's victories in the opener of the Smart PBA Philippine Cup semifinals.

But it won't deter anyone from the fact that Purefoods and Alaska have more than 3-0 leads over Red Bull and Sta. Lucia (indeed under their belts—they're both wearing the battle of the wills).

The Powder Puffs (Purefoods) and the Aces gunslive 2-0 leads today at the Cuneta Astrodome, hoping to shoot closets with what will give them complete control of the series—if they both haven't succumbed them after mentioning wins on Sunday shoot the Power series.

"It's very easy not really to make predictions and one game doesn't decide a series," Ginnal Giant champion coach Cone, who is seeking his 11th overall title. said. "It (Game 1 victory) doesn't guarantee us anything."

The Aces and the Builders, who came out of a three-week break looking totally rusty, dug it out in the 7:20 p.m. session, just right after the Giants and the Bombers collide at 4:30 p.m.

"The only advantage that we have is that we have to win three games and they have to win four." Congrats said. "I think we just went up against a battle-weary foe (Red) team. Clearly, this (Game 1) was not their game."

But the Giants were deadly in their execution, leading by huge margins early and winning even bigger as Red Bull never found its way into the game for one of its tight losses in the tourney.

Purefoods duped the telling breakaway in the third period, behind rookie point guard Chico Lanete, who burned the Bombers with 16 of his 19 points both second four three-point shots.

And what's more surprising is the 103-84 win was that James Yap, the 2004 Most Valuable Player, never saw the need to assert himself offensively. He finished with just 11 points, one of five Giants in double digits.

Yap hitting his stride today would make matters a lot more difficult for Red Bull's Yeng Guiao, who got practically nothing working on finding an effort that was far from the form the Bombers displayed in coming powerhouse Magnolia in their quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, the Builders, after closing out the elimination round with a four-three record right straight wins, were suddenly the town of old starting from the second quarter of their series opener with the Aces.

Alaska trailed an early 16-point deficit and then broke away from there to win with plenty to spare as its backcourt dominated Sta. Lucia's still-impunity.

Wilaving B. Castillo

GAMES TODAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Purefoods
7:20 p.m.—Alaska vs Sta. Lucia

STA. LUCIA'S Mellvel Dinadon squeezes between Alaska's Jeffrey Cariaso and Sonny Thoss (partly hidden) for a shot in Sunday's Game 1. BONG D.

POC tackles 'touchy' issue today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BY ALL INDICATIONS, THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee general assembly today—which will elect a new chairman—will be spiked with debates.

This after POC chair and presiding officer Robert Aventajado announced that attempts to amend the constitution and by-laws will have to "go through the process."

"As long as the procedure complies with the provisions of the POC constitution and by-laws, I will allow it to proceed," Aventajado told the reporters. "But anything that is in addition to that will have to be (thoroughly discussed)."

POC deputy secretary general Mark Joseph earlier hinted that the chairs change will be at the GA agenda today, primarily those seeking to lengthen terms like substitutes, and doping and medical rules.

Aventajado said the issue of making amendments actually started during the term of POC president Cojuangco, who stayed from 1998 to 2004.

The amendments is aimed at aligning the by-laws of the POC with that of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

"I think (POC president Peping) Cojuangco wants to [complete the amendments]," said Aventajado.

Darchinyan: I will stop Gorres

DARCHINYAN

FORMER WORLD FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION VIC Darchinyan has vowed to knock out Filipino Cesar Gorres when they square off on Saturday at the Waterfront Hotel and Casino here.

This early, he is asking for the forgiveness of Filipinos, who he promised for their hospitality.

"The Filipino people are very nice, very friendly," said the 32-year old Darchinyan. "But I'm very sorry. I'm going to knock out your boy."

The 12-round fight, promoted by Solar Sports, the Promotions and Gary Shaw Promotions, is a title eliminator for the right to challenge Dmitry Kyliko of Australia for the International Boxing Federation (IBF) super flyweight title.

Gorres (27-2-1 and 15 KOs) and Darchinyan (29-1 with 23 KOs) meet today for the final press conference at the Cosmian Room of the Waterfront Hotel.

Darchinyan said he has "studied Gorres' past fights including the Filipino's failed title bid opposite Mexican Fernando Montiel last year.

The boxing card dubbed "Thrust or Strike" starts at 6 p.m. and will be telecast on Solar Sports.

SPORTSWATCH

Bobby fights Mexican Mar. 13

BOBBY PACQUIAO WILL FACE UNBEATEN Mexican Alfredo Antelo in Las Vegas on March 13.

The bout takes place two days before Bobby's superstar brother Manny Pacquiao battles Mexican champ Juan Manuel Marquez for the World Boxing Council super featherweight crown in Las Vegas.

The younger Bobby, currently training at the ARANETA GYM in Los Angeles, is coming off a fourth round technical knockout win over barnstorm Jesus Ramirez.

The 25-year old Antelo (21-2, 14 KOs) has been steadily built up by Top Rank.

Gutierrez A. Augustinburg, Contributor

Parenpang pillars host derby

THE DELANCO DE GUZMAN DOORSAY ing—scorers Peter Jacobs, Jeff Jaoga, Jonjon Arenas and business man Tony Narvios—will host a ring fight at the Puerto Santo in Pasig City on Feb. 2.

National Godwin Association members Gov. Iggy Arroyo, Gov. Ito Ynares, Patrick Antonio, Boy Briones, Pio de Guzman, Mayor Eric Canobi, Celso de los Angeles, Paul Bicutan, Edgar Santos, Jhun Rudy Santos, Manny Pacquiao, Sec. Ronnie Puno, Gary Ramos, Freddie Buenaventa Jr., Tony Lucabo, Benjie Lim, Eric dela Rosa, Bebot Villar, Art Borja, Edwin Santos, Jun Santiago, Eddie Peñalber, Edwin Ayala, Boy Jimenez, Sammy Santos, Armand Santos, Mario Villarroel, Hotdog Jaque Brothers, Grupo Jones, and Elan Baguio promise to field their team in the derby.

Sagupaan 5-cracker kicks off

ITS LAST TWO-HANDICAP GAME OF THE cockers today at San Juan Coliseum as the "Sagupaan Invitational 5 cock derby."

The 75-fight program is hosted by Jose Cardoso with the cooperation of Patrick Antonio, the ICAP and the HDA.

The event comes on the heels of the ILC International 8-Cock Derby last week, where five participants emerged as co-champs. Pres. Jerry "Jay" Lopena, Magic Cpe. Ong the Boss and Engr. Rodencio Tong-Lumba Cpt Cardoso and Rodolfo Pineda.

PSC boss going all out to stop boxing anomaly

BANGKOK—THE FOLLOWING ITEM was originally intended as a sweet report.

But, as the decision made by the reasons person came partly as a result of a previous piece here, the item will have to come across as ominous hints.

Kindly read on:

Alarmed by the failed bids of four Filipino boxers here, Philippine Sports Commission chair Ronie Ramirez yesterday vowed to take immediate measures to stop the anomalous practice of sending aging, retarded boxers to major international tournaments like the current Olympic qualifier.

Ramirez, who rushed from the airport to the Hotel by Pacific University gym on Monday was shaken and upset upon learning that only four, namely Jonas Tipon, from among the five RP aspirants sent here, remained in contention for an Olympic slot.

* * *

Ramirez obviously expected better results after spending a reported sojourn from top amateur boxing officials that the five-man RP team's final examination, accompanied by two

BABE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

doctors—a sports psychologist and a chiropractor—was at its peak, mentally and physically.

In fact, Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez, exuding confidence that no less than two of his boxers would pass the Olympic qualifying test, quipped that he would be glad to welcome an extra third slot from here.

Bodies hoped would settle again, however, four of his fighters left empty-handed.

Lopez has kept his mouth shut following the bloody stoppage suffered by Fil-Am light welterweight Adano Bigornia Fel on Sunday that left Bigornia at the late Filipino fiddler here.

* * *

Indeed, Lopez again hinted they would seek for reforms.

But Ramirez, reacting in a previous bygone commentary that derailed the shallow practice of sending old, losing boxers for repeated trips to the Olympics, vowed to punish responsible parties.

"It may be too late to do it for the Beijing Olympics, but we must work to correct this poor practice," Ramirez told the bosses.

He said that, contrary to unfounded claims, there are countless talented boxers in the countryside waiting to be tapped and trained for major international battles.

He said he would soon leave for Cuba to get a couple of coaches who could help him in the PSC redevelopment program.

* * *

However, upon being reminded that it would be useless if these coaches again handled fighters picked through Abap's myopic style of scouting, Ramirez vowed to mark a big change in the sport's style of boxing geared to land RP's first Olympic gold medal.

"The first rounds we will give to Abap for its quest in Beijing, but the other one we will take on a wide, wide tour of the countryside where we would scout for budding talents," Ramirez said.

With the projected Cuban coach fearing a direct hand in choosing the right fighters, Ramirez said the PSC contribution could be as effective as transporting the core of the Cuban boxing program to the Philippines.

* * *

For a change, Ramirez said he would go on his own and coordinate with provincial executives, like North Cotabato Vice Gov. Manny Pinol and Rep. Teodoro Palumuk, who have vast reservoir of untapped talents in their localities in Mindanao.

Pinol, who plans to tour the south and develop programs, Ramirez plans to tap the respected sportsman Tony Aldegon.

Meanwhile, Lopez said they would review their progress when they return to Manila.

Both Ramirez and the PSC redevelopment program need not be immediately tied up with what the Abap has to mind.

PFF mulls lifetime ban on 'Peeping Tom' ref

By Jasmine W. Pays

THE UAAP FOOTBALL REFEREE ACCUSED OF video voyeurism may face a lifetime ban to local competitions.

Football officials made the recommendation yesterday after suspending Dennis Balore, the referee caught taking videos of UAAP women's volleyball players using his mobile phone in the shower room of the Blue Eagle Gym in Ateneo Sunday afternoon.

"We're holding at a lifetime ban in the UAAP and all football activities," said Jojo Rodrigues, UAAP football commissioner and Philippine Football Federation deputy general secretary.

"As far as I can remember, it's the worst sanction I've will ever slap on a referee since it involves decisions and integrity."

The National Capital Region Football Association officials met yesterday morning to discuss the possible sanctions on Balore, who was charged with unjust vexation and child abuse by varsity athletes who he videotaped in various forms of undress.

"We sent a letter to PFF explaining that as far, he's not been convicted yet on criminal cases," NCFFA president Jose Pilo Bautista said yesterday.

Among Balore's unsupporting victims—some aged below 18—are players from the University of the East, the Eastern University La Salle and former champion of Santo Tomas.

The 30-year-old referee, married and a resident of Tondo, Manila, remains detained at Camp Rafael in Quezon City.

"We're still waiting for the Bicol's decision," said PCO Marlon Ortiopio, the investigator on case at the Quezon City Police District.

Nine UP players, including two minors, already filed charges last Monday. Child abuse entails a 12-year maximum imprisonment and a P500,000 bail.

Despite the scandal, the volleyball games will continue as scheduled at the Blue Eagle Gym, according to athletic director Alberto Barbon of the University of the Philippines.

NBA STANDINGS

EAST CONFERENCE

Standings	W	L	PCT	GB
Atlantic Division				
x-Boston	34	8	.810	–
x-Orlando	33	10	.767	2
x-New Jersey	30	16	.652	7
x-Philadelphia	27	18	.600	9½
x-NY Knicks	14	30	.318	20½
Central Division				
y-Detroit	33	11	.750	–
x-Cleveland	27	18	.600	6½
x-Toronto	25	20	.556	8½
x-Indiana	20	25	.444	13½
x-Milwaukee	20	27	.426	14½
x-Chicago	17	30	.362	17½
Southeast Division				
y-Miami	30	14	.682	–
x-Washington	22	19	.537	6
x-Atlanta	21	22	.488	8
x-Charlotte	20	22	.476	8½
x-Memphis	20	23	.465	9

WEST CONFERENCE

Northwest Division			
y-Utah	31	14	.689
x-Portland	28	15	.651
x-Denver	26	17	.605
x-Seattle	8	36	.182
x-Minnesota	8	36	.182
Pacific Division			
y-Phoenix	33	11	.750
x-LA Lakers	27	16	.628
x-Golden State	25	18	.581
x-Sacramento	20	23	.465
x-LA Clippers	13	28	.317
Southwest Division			
x-San Antonio	30	13	.698
x-Dallas	30	14	.682
x-New Orleans	26	16	.619
x-Houston	23	20	.535
x-Memphis	20	23	.465

FOOTBALL STANDINGS

Before Tuesday's games

Italian Serie A

Team	GP	W	D	L	Pts
AS Roma	22	16	4	2	52
Inter Milan	22	15	5	2	50
Juventus	22	14	5	3	47
Fiorentina	22	13	5	4	44
AC Milan	22	12	6	4	42
Palermo	22	11	6	5	39
Lazio	22	10	6	6	36
Udinese	22	9	7	6	34
Genoa	22	9	6	7	33
Catania	22	8	6	8	30
Cagliari	22	8	5	9	29
Sampdoria	22	7	6	9	27
Chievo	22	7	5	10	26
Empoli	22	6	6	10	24
Reggina	22	6	5	11	23
Siena	22	5	6	11	21
Torino	22	5	5	12	20
Parma	22	4	6	12	18
Livorno	22	4	5	13	17
Atalanta	22	3	6	13	15
Messina	22	3	5	14	14

Relegation: Atalanta, Messina and Livorno

Leading scorers: 17 - Francesco Totti (Roma), Antonio Di Natale (Udinese); 15 - Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus), Alberto Gilardino (Fiorentina); 13 - Luca Toni (Palermo), Marco Di Vaio (Bologna), Vincenzo Iaquinta (Udinese); 12 - Alessandro Matri (Cagliari), Giampaolo Pazzini (Sampdoria), Antonio Cassano (Roma), Alessandro Diamanti (Bologna), Fabrizio Miccoli (Palermo), Mauro Zarate (Lazio)

English Premier League

Team	GP	W	D	L	Pts
Manchester United	24	18	4	2	58
Arsenal	24	15	5	4	50
Chelsea	24	14	6	4	48
Liverpool	24	13	6	5	45
Everton	24	12	6	6	42
Aston Villa	24	11	6	7	39
Blackburn	24	10	6	8	36
Portsmouth	24	10	5	9	35
Manchester City	24	9	7	8	34
Wigan	24	9	6	9	33
Tottenham	24	9	5	10	32
West Ham	24	8	6	10	30
Newcastle	24	7	7	10	28
Middlesbrough	24	7	6	11	27
Bolton	24	6	7	11	25
Fulham	24	6	6	12	24
Sunderland	24	6	5	13	23
Reading	24	5	6	13	21
Derby	24	4	6	14	18
Birmingham	24	3	7	14	16
Manchester City	24	3	6	15	15

Relegation: Birmingham, Manchester City and Derby

Leading scorers: 15 - Didier Drogba (Chelsea), Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United); 14 - Emmanuel Adebayor (Arsenal), Nicolas Anelka (Bolton), Robbie Keane (Liverpool); 13 - Dimitar Berbatov (Manchester United), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Jermain Defoe (Tottenham), Andrew Johnson (Everton), Darren Bent (Reading)

Primera Liga

Team	GP	W	D	L	Pts
Barcelona	22	16	5	1	53
Valencia	22	15	4	3	49
Sevilla	22	14	4	4	46
Villarreal	22	13	4	5	43
Real Madrid	22	12	5	5	41
Atletico Madrid	22	11	5	6	38
Espanyol	22	10	5	7	35
Real Betis	22	9	6	7	33
Deportivo La Coruna	22	9	5	8	32
Getafe	22	8	6	8	30
Mallorca	22	8	5	9	29
Osasuna	22	7	6	9	27
Racing Santander	22	7	5	10	26
Real Sociedad	22	6	6	10	24
Recreativo	22	6	5	11	23
Athletic Bilbao	22	5	6	11	21
Numancia	22	5	5	12	20
Sporting Gijon	22	4	6	12	18
Levante	22	4	5	13	17
Almeria	22	3	6	13	15
Real Valladolid	22	3	5	14	14

Relegation: Almeria, Real Valladolid and Levante

Leading scorers: 15 - Diego Forlan (Villarreal), Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Real Madrid); 14 - Samuel Eto'o (Barcelona), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid); 13 - Fernando Morientes (Sevilla), Raul Albiol (Valencia), Roberto Soldado (Valencia); 12 - Raul Tamudo (Espanyol), Jose Antonio Reyes (Sevilla), Antonio Valencia (Valencia), Ruben Castro (Real Betis), Aritz Aduriz (Mallorca), Alfredo Kraus (Deportivo La Coruna)

Hornets fan streak, sting Nuggets

NEW ORLEANS—THE RED-HOT NEW ORLEANS HORNETS cruised to their ninth straight victory, crushing the Denver Nuggets, 117-93, on Monday.

Chris Paul led the way with 23 points, 17 assists and nine rebounds as the Hornets improved to 33-1 for January and moved within one win of a franchise record for consecutive victories.

Paul received "MVP" as Paul shot five threes in the first quarter while New Orleans coach Byron Scott said the Hornets point guard was deserving of a mention for the league award.

"For what he's been able to achieve, for how he's played and how we've played as a team, you have to give him some recognition for that award," Scott told reporters.

Five other Hornets scored in double figures with Peja Stojakovic getting 19 and Hakim Ely scoring 16. Tyson Chandler worked the boards for 16 rebounds and 10 points.

"The biggest issue for the team's success succeed has been that we haven't has played much better," Byrd said. "Our starters have been dynamic all season, but when our bench plays as well as our starting five, we're going to be tough to beat."

Allen Iverson led the injury-depleted Nuggets with 23 points, topping the 22,000 point mark for his career in the third quarter.

High-scoring Carmelo Anthony ruined his fourth consecutive game with a sprained left ankle.

"Right now we are struggling to score points, but we caught a great team," Nuggets coach George Karl told reporters.

The Western Conference-leading Hornets led 61-44 at halftime as 33-22 first-period lead and extended their advantage to 81-61 at halftime.

The Dallas Mavericks won their fourth consecutive game, rolling in a 103-89 road victory over the Memphis Grizzlies behind Josh Howard's 26 points. Jason Terry(16) added 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Mavericks, who took control of the game in the first quarter when they outscored the Grizzlies, 31-19.

The win was Dallas's 12th consecutive over Memphis.

Dirk Nowitzki, Jerry Stackhouse, Josh Howard hit his first eight shots on the way to 26 points and Dallas shot 54 percent in a 100-84 victory over Memphis.

Howard finished 10 for 17 for Dallas, which won its fourth straight and 12 in the last 14.

In Los Angeles, Gerald Wallace had 23 points, eight assists and six rebounds, Jason Richardson added 20 points and Charlotte beat the undermanned Los Angeles Clippers, 107-100. Newsvine

NEW ORLEANS Hornets forward Peja Stojakovic (right) shoots against the defense of Denver Nuggets forward Eduardo Najera.

TOM BRADY runs a drill at the start of football practice.

Brady rejoins Patriots practice

PHOENIX, ARIZONA—NEW ENGLAND quarterback Tom Brady, whose right ankle has been the subject of excited speculation for a week, returned to practice Monday as the subject of the Patriots continued their Super Bowl preparations.

Brady, the National Football League Most Valuable Player, had his ankle taped and participated in limp slightly, but participated "in all phases of practice, including jogging the length of the field easier at the end of drills," according to a pool report.

Brady has been essential to making the Patriots the first 16-0 team in NFL history, setting a single-season record with 50 touchdowns and passing for 4,806 yards.

So it caused a sensation when he suffered late week wearing a protective boot on his right foot.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick was characteristically terse when asked about Brady on Monday.

"He was out there like everybody else," Belichick said.

Pressed again, Belichick only repeated: "He was out there like everybody else." AFP

SSC, Perpetual set NCAA ladies beach volley pace

By Jasmine W. Paye

SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE and the University of Perpetual Help set the pace in the NCAA women's beach volleyball tournament after obtaining their third straight victories against opponents in duels at the La Salle Green Hills sand courts over the weekend.

The Lady Stags pair of Lara Ann Latigay and Margarita Regala trampled on Stopera's Marian Pecundang and Miriam Sotelo, 21-9, 21-7, while the Lady Altas tandem of Jean-Ann Bagaoisan and Rinna de Luna downed Lorraine's Rosann Rigodo and Rizelle Mendoza, 21-12, 21-18.

But the Knights reigned in men's action with a 3-0 clean sweep of Jude Cunlao and Nimrod Pinazon posted a 21-8, 21-16 triumph over San Beda's Christian Agudo and Leonel Lamayo.

In table tennis, St. Benilde got its women's title defense off to a good start with a 3-0 blanking of Ann Raisel Dedevesky in the team tournament opener yesterday at the Greenhills Gym.

The Blazers completed an opening day sweep with the men's squad posting a 3-0 triumph over the Emmy Bombers and the Junior Blazers topping the San Beda Red Cubs, 3-2, in junior action.

Lewers, San Beda and Letbetter also join the opening-day winners in men's action.

The Knights entered back the Emmy Bombers at 3-0, while the Lions entered through an easy victory with a 3-0 rout of the Mapua Cardinals.

Jose like their senior counterparts, the Squires downed the Light Bombers, 3-0, in the juniors division.

The Staglets also was classed the Adalteros at 3-0.

Table tennis action still resumes tomorrow.

Shuttle makers give badminton a boost

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE BADMINTON, dying internationally for lacking homegrown talent and a much needed shot in the arm by way of ISSEI Intersol Sharkworks Limited.

The shuttlecock and racket maker promised to help resurrect Filipino talents by supporting development projects involving the national team.

Badminton in the country may have been stagnant compared with its neighbors in Southeast Asia, but the sport's popularity pounds among Asian-conscious Filipinos remains on the upward swing.

And that didn't escape the attention of ISSEI.

Dennis Chua, manager for ISSEI, international business development, yesterday made the Philippines their first stop in its 80th anniversary promotional road show.

"Interest in badminton has snowballed throughout the world in recent years and nowhere is that more than in the Southeast Asian region," said Chua, who was accompanied by executives of Eday's Sports led by Toby Chandler.

The country has been headed into the past two Southeast Asian Games, where it was pitted against world powers Malaysia and Indonesia.

UAAP roundup: Ateneo, UST stamp class

By Jasmine N. Paye

ATENEO DOMINATED THE UAAP FOOTball tournament by sailing the men and women's divisions at the end of first round action over the weekend in Rizal Memorial Football Stadium.

University of Santo Tomas holds it over the men's and girls divisions of volleyball and teams the lead with University of the Philippines in handball where it is the defending champion. UP paces the softball event.

The Blue Eagles claimed the top spot with a 6-0-1 win-draw-loss record for a 13-point total after striker Gino Delgado's 28th minute goal lifted them over a 1-0 victory over the University of the East last Sunday at the Rizal Memorial Football Stadium.

For the Lady Eagles, a scoreless draw versus rival La Salle proved good enough to lead the dreadful table with a 2-2-0 slate for a total of eight points.

The Far Eastern U Tamaraws, who dealt Ateneo's lone loss with a surprise 2-0 triumph, marched second with a 5-1-0 mark (16 points) after wrapping up the first round with a 2-1 standoff against UST.

Defending women's champion FEU closed in at fourth with a 2-1-1 record (7 points) after topping MVP Rachelle Laiza scored three goals in a 7-1 crushing of winless UP.

UAAP STANDINGS

MEN'S FOOTBALL (W-D-L-Score-GD-Pts): ADMU 6-0-1, 302, 13; UP 5-1-1, 187, 9-0; FEU 5-1-0, 16-3, +13, 16; DLSU 3-1-3, 10-8, +2, 10; UST 2-3-1, 7-9, -2, 7; NU 2-4-0, 6-11, -5, 6; UE 1-5-0, 4-13, -9, 3; AdU 0-6-1, 3-16, -13, 1.

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL (W-D-L-Score-GD-Pts): ADMU 6-0-0, 21-0, +21, 18; FEU 2-1-1, 7-1, +6, 7; DLSU 2-1-0, 5-3, +2, 6; UST 2-1-0, 4-3, +1, 6; NU 1-3-0, 3-5, -2, 3; UE 1-4-0, 3-7, -4, 3; UP 0-4-1, 1-8, -7, 1; AdU 0-4-0, 0-13, -13, 0.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (W-L-Sets-Pts): UST 12-0, 36-6, 12; DLSU 10-2, 30-11, 10; FEU 8-4, 26-16, 8; NU 7-5, 24-19, 7; UP 6-6, 23-23, 6; UE 4-8, 15-28, 4; AdU 2-10, 11-32, 2; ADMU 1-11, 9-34, 1.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (W-L-Sets-Pts): UST 12-0, 36-3, 12; DLSU 11-1, 33-8, 11; ADMU 10-2, 30-9, 10; FEU 8-4, 25-15, 8; NU 6-6, 20-21, 6; UP 5-7, 18-24, 5; UE 3-9, 12-29, 3; AdU 1-11, 6-34, 1; FEU 0-12, 5-36, 0.

MEN'S HANDBALL (W-L-Sets-Pts): UP 12-0, 36-3, 12; ADMU 11-1, 33-8, 11; DLSU 10-2, 30-9, 10; FEU 8-4, 25-15, 8; NU 6-6, 20-21, 6; UST 5-7, 18-24, 5; UE 3-9, 12-29, 3; AdU 1-11, 6-34, 1; FEU 0-12, 5-36, 0.

The Lady Falcons nosed over the Lady Eagles, 25-14, 25-15, 20-23, to grab the women's solo lead and secure the first Final Four berth.

Rose Jane Sagaysay topscored with 16 points, while Jackie Ilo and Angela Benting chipped in 13 apiece as the Lady Falcons wrestled their winning run to nine games.

For the defending champion Tamaraws tied to the Lady Tamaraws in sweep with 6-25-15, 25-20, 25-19 decision as both squads settled for a share of second at 8-3.

Winning strains also highlighted junior action with UE looking poised to defend the boys crown with a 4-0 sweep, while the UST girls trampled over the Baby Tamaraws in their turn.

Ateneo, however, unbeaten in the softball competition with Alexis Gamapia and restored team mainstay Irene Mecon starting for UP in a 6-3 manner over first-time champion Ateneo set featuring at the UST Open field.

With the victory the Lady Maroons claimed the solo lead at 4-0 as the Lady Falcons absorbed their first loss in three games.

A surprise victory also emerged in baseball as fourth-ranked Adamson shocked UST, 5-3, at the Rizal Memorial Ballpark last Sunday.

The Tigers teamed up shaming the top spot at 4-1 with the Warriors, who trailed the Eagles at 11-0.

SPORTS

Bayron paces DHL Nat'l Amateur

By Maong B. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—LITTLE BROTHER is stepping out of the shadows.

Dublin "Bai Dal" Bayron shot four straight birdies From the ninth hole to assemble a three-under par 69 yesterday and take a one-stroke lead after the opening round of the 13th DHL/WWF/Egyptic National Amateur golf championship at the tree-lined Canlubang North Course.

The 20-year-old Bayron, younger brother of rookie pro and 2007 DHL winner Jay, smoked his final four holes in the three-way battle at legacy tal. Pts. 13 to lead Anthony Fernando and Jessie Palisadoso by one.

Pro+ players, led by national team member Mark Fernando and former jungolf ace Emilio Antolin, were another stroke farther adrift with 71s as eight players cracked par over the 6,872-yard layout that offered little defense due to the lack of winds.

Bayron, one of the first products of the National Caddies Open program that started three years ago, struck four-shots stone in the pins. He almost aced the par-3, 179-yard No. 6 with a 7-iron, his ball landing within three inches of the hole.

"It's a good start, definitely," Bayron said in Filipino. "The winds did not blow as hard today, that's why there were many players who broke par. I have to be ready, especially if the winds come."

Bayron was prolific yesterday, following up that score are with an 18-inch putt for birdie on the seventh hole off a 52-degree wedge from 60 yards.

He left himself with 30 yards for his second shot on the eighth, a 344-yard par-4, where he calmly lobbed a 60-degree wedge to within two feet before shooting down another bird on the ninth from eight feet.

BF Amateur champion and national team mainstay Armando, who scored up dead last in the risk The Country Club Invitational last week, picked up shots in the two par-5s in the back nine while parring the rest.

The 28-year-old Fernando, the second SCGA champion, had an up-and-down round, failing to catch Bayron at the hole after tapping his drive to the right of the No. 18 for his second bogey.

ALFONSO Bayron hits his drive on the third hole.

Mark Fernando rolled three o 39 to the front with a 32 coming in, gunning down birdies on 11, 13, 14 and 17 to surge into contention. He finished seventh here last year.

Muhammad Hanif, a member of the Malaysian national squad, was the best-placed foreigner, his 71 giving him a share of fourth with Bud Echanez and Mario Cabajar.

Some of the notables who struggled were BF team member Jessel Abalos, who threw a 75, and former national Ervin Mabasay, the long hitter who shot a 78.

Ladies action starts today with Dottie Ardina, the pocket-sized multi-titled junior, unable to defend her title after failing to get a sponsor from her studies at the Landmark Seminary in Florida.

THE LAUNCHING OF THE THUNDERBIRD WINNING TEAM

The Thunderbird Winning Team, the pride of Thunderbird Event Hosts, The Winning Formula of their newest television commercial, was formally introduced last night (January 29) at Ninoy Aquino Coliseum during the 14th PBA World Slasher Cup 8 Tilt Cock International Derby.

"The endorsement of these well-known, big time winning stars which comprises the Thunderbird Winning Team, truly symbolizes and represents the truth that Thunderbird really is the best gamefowl feed in the Philippines. This will show that every Thunderbird earns the right to be called 'The Winning Formula'," says Ramon Bautista — Product Manager of Thunderbird.

The Thunderbird Winning Team, which are champions in their own rights, are composed of the original endorsers of Thunderbird — Sonny Lagos of Bino Blade Game Farm, Winning Stars of Tagaytay and San Antonio and favorite for his Kadio Cemano and 3-time World Slasher Champion, Jerry Lee of Dasmariñas.

The new members of The Thunderbird Winning Team include National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders Presidents and ambassadors Fanny Lumanlan Breeders Association President, Rizzy Palmares, partners, Events stories and Bally Campos of BEE Game Farm, World Slasher Cup owners Ma. Marcia of Rambulan Association, multi-awarded breeder-cutter, Cong. Lacanaria Watsang of Cavendish Gamefowl in Antipas, top farmer breeder of Bacolod, Jun Lacanaria 2006 Exhibition champion, Tan brothers of Davao and the current Gamefowl Breeder of the Year of the Luzon Gamefowl Breeders Association, Dr. Ric Francis of Pampanga.

"They are just some of the breakwater who assembled in the outstanding industry and gamefowl breeding, using the winning formula of Thunderbird. We are thankful and grateful for their trust and support," declares Thunderbird President and CEO Mr. Ric Alba.

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THUNDERBIRD

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Konica Minolta Pro-Am golf limits field to 110 teams

ONLY 110 TEAMS WILL BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE KONICA Minolta/National Pro-Am Golf Championships, according to the event's organizing committee headed by retired commodore Sonny Pizarro.

Now on its seventh year, the tournament sponsored by Ricoh Corp. and organized by the National Golf Association of The Philippines will be held at one of The Riviera's Larger 6-Sking Golfs on March 1-8.

The Celebrity Pro-Am on March 1 will be led by former Presidential Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Ermita and Senate President Manuel Villar. Other celebrities expected to play are Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Miriam Defensor Santiago, Ralph Recto, Manny Villar, Jinggoy Estrada, Bong Revilla, Jamby Madrigal, Loren Legarda, Mar Roxas, Francis Escudero, Jamby Madrigal, Ramon Revilla Jr., Richard Gomez, Dingdong Dantes, Dennis Roldan, Ariel Ureta, Ramon Bautista, Ramon Zamora, Jack Enrile, Ramon Ang, Lucio Tan Jr., Manny Pangilinan, Tony Tan Caktiong, Lucio Co, Enrique Razon Jr., Andrew Tan, Henry Sy Jr., Hans Sy, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Antonio Cabangon Chua, Jose Concepcion III, Jose Concepcion Jr., Oscar Hilado, Jose Ma. Lopez, Jose Ma. Ayala Lopez, Jose Ma. Ayala Jr., Jaime Ayala, Fernando Ayala, Antonio Ayala, Enrique Ayala, Alfonso Ayala, Ramon Ayala, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala III, Fernando Zobel de Ayala III, Antonio Zobel de Ayala III, Enrique Zobel de Ayala III, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala III, Ramon Zobel de Ayala III, Jaime Zobel de Ayala IV, Fernando Zobel de Ayala IV, Antonio Zobel de Ayala IV, Enrique Zobel de Ayala IV, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala IV, Ramon Zobel de Ayala IV, Jaime Zobel de Ayala V, Fernando Zobel de Ayala V, Antonio Zobel de Ayala V, Enrique Zobel de Ayala V, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala V, Ramon Zobel de Ayala V, Jaime Zobel de Ayala VI, Fernando Zobel de Ayala VI, Antonio Zobel de Ayala VI, Enrique Zobel de Ayala VI, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala VI, Ramon Zobel de Ayala VI, Jaime Zobel de Ayala VII, Fernando Zobel de Ayala VII, Antonio Zobel de Ayala VII, Enrique Zobel de Ayala VII, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala VII, Ramon Zobel de Ayala VII, Jaime Zobel de Ayala VIII, Fernando Zobel de Ayala VIII, Antonio Zobel de Ayala VIII, Enrique 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Alfonso Zobel de Ayala XIV, Ramon Zobel de Ayala XIV, Jaime Zobel de Ayala XV, Fernando Zobel de Ayala XV, Antonio Zobel de Ayala XV, Enrique Zobel de Ayala XV, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala XV, Ramon Zobel de Ayala XV, Jaime Zobel de Ayala XVI, Fernando Zobel de Ayala XVI, Antonio Zobel de Ayala XVI, Enrique Zobel de Ayala XVI, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala XVI, Ramon Zobel de Ayala XVI, Jaime Zobel de Ayala XVII, Fernando Zobel de Ayala XVII, Antonio Zobel de Ayala XVII, Enrique Zobel de Ayala XVII, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala XVII, Ramon Zobel de Ayala XVII, Jaime Zobel de Ayala XVIII, Fernando Zobel de Ayala XVIII, Antonio Zobel de Ayala XVIII, Enrique Zobel de Ayala XVIII, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala XVIII, Ramon Zobel de Ayala XVIII, Jaime Zobel de Ayala XIX, Fernando Zobel de Ayala XIX, Antonio Zobel de Ayala XIX, Enrique Zobel de Ayala XIX, Alfonso Zobel de Ayala XIX, Ramon Zobel de Ayala XIX, Jaime Zobel de Ayala XX, Fernando Zobel de Ayala XX, Antonio Zobel de Ayala XX, Enrique Zobel de Ayala XX, 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BUSINESS
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ASIANA AIR

Gov't floats $500M in sovereign bonds

Country may draw $700M from ADB

By Abigail L. Ho

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) confirmed yesterday it would make available $700 million in loans to the country this year, with around $250 million to be set aside for the ongoing National Transmission Corp. concessionaire.

In an interview on the sidelines of yesterday's Energy Summit, ADB Southeast Asia department director general Thomas Gronch said the $700 million would be divided among various sectors, including energy, agriculture, health and policy reform.

For the energy sector, in particular, he said the multilateral lender would continue to support the ongoing privatization of the National Power Corp.'s generation assets.

The Monorail Board had earlier approved the $400 million loan that Manila Power Partners Co. Ltd.—the winning bidder for the 600-megawatt coal-fired power facility in Limbaloc—planned to take out to eventually expand the capacity of the generation plant.

Of the amount, $200 million would be borrowed from the ADB and $250 million from the International Finance Corp., the private-sector arm of the World Bank.

Gronch said the ADB had also committed to provide a $200-million standby facility to whoever would win the bidding for the 25-year Transco concession.

COUNTRY/B6

RP's credit standing seen to boost sale

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY floated $500 million in sovereign bonds in the international capital market, hoping to complete its foreign commercial borrowing requirement for the year before problems brought on by the US subprime market become worse.

"We have announced the offering this morning in Asia," said Roberto Tan, acting national treasurer and finance undersecretary.

The issue is expected to be priced at about 87.5/8, according to two people involved in the deal. The bonds will mature in 2032.

Credit Suisse and Deutsche Bank are handling the bond sale for the Philippines.

The Department of Finance decided that it would be prudent to borrow all the $500 million in one tranche before investor rates in the external market become more volatile.

Analysts expect more banks to repair losses in their subprime market trading in the months ahead. That development is seen to adversely affect appetite for bonds issued by emerging economies, which have a similar credit rating with that of the US subprime market.

The DOF said the government timed the bond offer probably—coming a week after Moody's Investors Service improved its outlook on the Philippines from "stable" to "positive."

A "positive" outlook indicates possibility of an increase in the country's credit rating within the short term. Moody's considered the most critical of the Philippines among credit ratings firms, sets the country's rating at four notches below investment grade.

Moody's cited the Philippine government's improving fiscal condition, among other reasons, for the improved outlook. The government was supposed to limit its budget deficit last year to P63 billion. But according to analysts, the actual budget gap could be significantly smaller due to higher revenue collections.

"We expect a lot of market interest for the bond issue," Tan told reporters after yesterday's bidding.

DEFICIT/B6

Philippine energy future hinges on political will

By Dazzle L. Lucas

SECRETARY RAUL TORRES has vowed that the 2008 Energy Summit would not go the way of previous gabfests whose fancy resort resolutions ended up in the waste bin, implemented half-heartedly or not at all.

But Torres is against him, as he had earlier pointed out that the local landscape "is littered with corpses of dead summits."

Indeed, energy summits have been called every so often since the Marcos era when the country first felt how vulnerable it was to the vagaries of the global oil market.

It was clear to many present, however, that the real challenge for the country and the various stakeholders is not to come up with new ideas in the field of energy—the newest proposals are already several years old, while the oldest date back to the 1970s—but to implement proposals that upset the status quo.

"The issue here is the need for political will," said Sen. Miguel Zubiri. "We have all these fancy plans, but at the end of the day, we need the political will [to legislate them] ... the executive [branch] needs political will to implement them."

Zubiri knows of what he speaks. Last year, he authored and shepherded the Biofuels Law through Congress, which was eventually enacted with much fanfare as the answer to the country's growing energy needs.

A year later, the law is now floundering due to institutional resistance and a lack of enthusiasm among regu-

PHILIPPINE/B4

BSP to subject banks' trust units to new rating system

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas will implement this year a rating system for the banking sector's trust operations, which is similar to the Camels system used to assess the bank's risk.

"We generally treat the trust department as separate from the bank proper, so we thought that for the purposes of better supervision, we will also apply a risk-based approach now to the operations of the trust department," said Nestor Espenilla Jr., BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination.

"And part of that supervision process is the assignment of ratings, but that's an internal rating in the sense now that Camels is an external rating, it's not for public release," he said.

Camels is a globally accepted bank rating system based on capital adequacy, asset quality, management quality, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk.

The BSP ranks banks based on Camels on a scale of one to five—with five as the highest—to identify banks in need of prompt corrective action.

The Camels rating, however, does not factor in the banking system's transaction accountabilities, which are considered "off-balance sheet" items.

The banking system's assets manager must accountabilities under trust—which include investment management accounts, unit investment trust funds, employee benefit plans, administratorship, custodianship, escrow, will maintenance, personal living trust... have reached the P5 trillion mark, requiring closer supervision.

Gains and losses from these trust accountabilities are borne by the client, unlike deposits, which are guaranteed by the bank.

The risk-based rating for banks' trust operations will be ready within the year, Espenilla said.

Aside from the internal rating system for banks' trust transactions, Espenilla said the BSP had likewise started requiring banks to submit their UITF products to a "stress test."

UITF pools funds from the public similar to a mutual fund.

The risk management guidelines are being formulated to identify, manage and control specific risks in the trust business.

In tandem with the bank standards, the risk management guidelines will require trust firms to adhere to "prudent principles of prudence and common care."

The rating system for trust accounts' abilities seeks to independently assess the firms' performance, given their special fiduciary responsibilities.

Overall, the rate specialized examination procedures are being drafted for trust operations to holistically align these with the risk-based approach and to incorporate compliance with the basic standards and risk management principles.

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Corrupt firemen

THE FOXY SHOPPING MALL NEAR TWO roughly quoted recently by a 40-hour fire.

As Tina Paloma's TV talk show, the firemen were accused of arriving late at the scene, and fumbling around with their hoses while the fire ran out of control.

There to talk in the insurance industry that the firemen were making more the more owners at the rate of P10,000 a week.

So, what else is new?

Two years ago, barely eight years ago, in an apocalyptic subdivision in Metro Manila, my client's house caught fire.

The firemen arrived in plenty of time to do their work. But they would not turn on their hoses unless my client paid up.

My client did not have any cash on hand, and the neighborhood bank was already closed.

He told the firemen to last the house of my relatives they could find. While the negotiations were being argued over, the fire ran out of control.

The house were finally turned on, but it was too late. The house was scorched.

A few years later, in another part of Metro Manila, my cousin's house caught fire one evening. The firemen arrived. They would not turn on their hoses unless my cousin came through with the money.

My cousin, a retired Navy officer, flatly refused the shakedown. The firemen then turned their hoses on the houses next door; apparently the neighbors had paid up. My cousin's house went a total loss.

In both cases, the houses were fully insured. In due time, the insurance companies paid the claims and the houses were rebuilt.

Before we start beating our breasts and bashing ourselves as a hopelessly corrupt society, New York City had the same problem about 70 years ago.

What the Mayor did then was to post his agents at an undisclosed place to take movies of the firemen from the time they arrived at the fire scene. The incriminating movies were used to prosecute the corrupt firemen. As a result, the firemen mend their ways.

What our mayors should do is assign their agents to take movies of any corrupt firemen as soon as they arrive on the fire scene. Using the videotapes, the operation should be easy. During relentless prosecution, our dirty firemen should finally mend their ways.

By the way, the victims of the Foxy mall fire will soon have to take care of another problem. To support his fire insurance claims, the store owners will have to secure an arson clearance.

This document means that the claimant is innocent of the crime of arson. The BFP is supposed to issue this document absolutely for free. But, of course, it is not free.

Some years back, the factory of a client of mine burned down. The investigators told my client that the arson clearance would cost him 10 percent of his claim. My client told the investigator to go jump in the lake.

I proved to the insurance company that their was no reason for my client to torch his factory.

Audited financial statements showed that my client had consistently made money.

Besides, the stocks that were burned were scheduled for export to fill his buyers' orders.

The insurance company agreed to waive the arson clearance. The claim was paid in full.

Let us grab the Foxy mall fire to an excellent opportunity to strike a mortal blow against corrupt firemen.

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

ADB supports current Epira law

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, ONE of the biggest lenders to the country's power sector, supports the implementation of RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, in its present form.

Thomas Cowell, ADB Southeast Asia department director general, said the multilateral lender continued to support the thrusts of the Epira, particularly the privatization of National Power Corp.'s assets.

"The privatization that's going on—the sale of assets and the recycling of those funds to pay down debts in the power sector—is a very important part of the overall macroeconomic strategy," he said yesterday on the sidelines of the Energy Summit. "If you don't fix the power sector, you won't be able to fix the fiscal imbalance."

While he categorically stating that the ADB was opposed to the amendment of the Epira, he said it would be practical to look at why there was a need to consider revising the existing law.

He said there were generally two reasons to revise an existing law: The possibility that there might be gaps that were overlooked at the time of the passage of the law, and the need to adjust to changes that had taken place from the time the law was passed.

There were both valid reasons to amend existing laws, he said. However, the amendment process might make the law "hostage to some political processes."

"So there's a risk that needs to be acknowledged, then recognized. You'll, also have some trade-offs. Can you work with the existing Epira? Or do we really want to do every little piece of it?" he said.

"Broadly speaking, we can work with the existing Epira, and it's with the implementation that you can perhaps make some adjustments. The law provides a robust framework against which the reforms can take place," he added.

The Intergovernmental and Multilateral Independent for the Philippines Inc. is urging Congress to reconsider proposals to amend the Epira as this may dampen investor interest in the power sector.

In a letter to House committee on energy chair Juan Miguel Arroyo, Seijo dash Arthur Yong Jr. said the move to amend the Epira, while the objective was to make local electricity rates more competitive, might do more harm than good in the long run.

"We believe that changing the rules at this juncture when power reforms are gathering momentum will dampen the confidence of both local and foreign investors.

The recent successes in (the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.'s) privatization program could come to a halt and put the credibility of the Philippine power sector reforms at risk," he said.

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Coco exports up in Oct. '07

By Amy R. Nunez

EXPORTS OF PHILIPPINE COCONUT products surged by 39.9 percent to October last year to 226,470 metric tons in copra terms from 157,598 MT in the same month the previous year, according to official data from the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Meanwhile, gross export receipts rose sharply by 90.2 percent in October last year to $138.66 million from the previous year's $72.91 million, due to the increase in copra prices.

PCA data showed that coconut oil and copra meal were the top gainers among the major export products in October.

Coconut oil posted a significant 48.3-percent growth year-on-year to 126,490 MT from 85,098 MT, while copra meal rose moderately by 14 percent to 49,408 MT from 43,374 MT.

The United States was the leading buyer of coconut oil in October, accounting for nearly half, or 48.3 percent of total trade.

Europe, specifically Netherlands, Italy and Spain, was a close second with a crude coconut oil uptake of 54,653 MT. Netherlands imported 30,800 MT; Italy, 8,750 MT and Spain 6,400 MT.

Benin and Vietnam, meanwhile, were the top importers of copra meal.

Benin imported 21,286 MT or about 46.9 percent of total shipments, and Vietnam accounted for 20,933 MT, or about 42 percent.

Other top markets were Japan with 4,266 MT, Taiwan with 1,057 MT, and Australia, 58 MT.

In contrast, desiccated coconut exports fell by 7.3 percent to 10,237 MT from 11,032 MT, while that of oleochemicals slightly declined by 2.8 percent to 7,071 MT from 7,270 MT in October 2006.

The United States remained the top market for desiccated coconut with purchases amounting to 2,310 MT or almost a fourth of exports, followed by United Kingdom with 1,128 MT or 11 percent.

The other big importers were Germany, 625 MT; Belgium, 600 MT; Netherlands, 360 MT; Australia, 361 MT; and Canada, 327 MT.

Exports for the first 10 months of the year, meanwhile, hit 1.37 million MT in copra terms, 18.6 percent lower than the 1.71 million MT sent out in the first 10 months of 2006.

Exports of coconut products such as coconut oil reached 910,750 MT from 2006's 950,001 MT; copra meal, 321,438 MT (from 373,094 MT); desiccated coconut, 110,300 MT (from 115,367 MT); oleochemicals as copra, 83,643 MT; from 90,890 MT); coco shell charcoal, 20,028 MT (from 21,579 MT); activated carbon, 24,212 MT (from 28,381 MT); glycerin, 13,210 MT (from 9,586 MT); and fresh coconuts, 622,307 (1,003 MT).

Peso rallies to hit 2-week high

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY ROLLED TO A two-week high of 43.65 against the dollar as prospects of further interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve lifted Asian currency markets.

The peso opened at the day's low of 44.80/$ and closed at the day's peak, gaining a hefty 30 centavos from Monday's finish of 44.95/$ to the dollar.

"It's affected by a number of factors, such as strong equity flows," Emigdio Sentmil ng Pilipinas Governor Armando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday.

Volume at the spot foreign exchange market Philippine Dealing System was relatively decent $367 million.

Currency traders added that Asian units were sharply gaining against the dollar following the US Federal Reserve's 75-basis-point cut in benchmark interest rates last week and expectations of another cut this week.

Lower interest rates in the United States deter our global investors to higher-yielding assets to emerging markets like the Philippines.

Tetangco, who has just arrived from a series of business meetings in Davos and Dubai, said foreign investors were upbeat on the Philippines notwithstanding a widely-reported US economic slowdown.

"In our meeting with the Swiss Chamber of Commerce, they recognized the good economic fundamentals in the Philippines and they are aware of the good perfor.

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Yehey! eyes listing in March

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE TODAY CONFIRMED that it is planning to list in March this year following the disposal of its shares to shareholders of its listed parent firm, Meralco Corp., Manila's corporate secretary Reynold R. Tan said.

Today's listing "by way of introduction" — an unconventional way of getting its shares traded at the Philippine Stock Exchange without having to go through an initial public offer (IPO) — will be made possible with the divestment ordered by Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) of its shares, Manila Exchange said in a disclosure.

The PSE has allocated the remaining 84.79 million shares of Yehey! to Meralco stockholders on record as of May 16, 2007.

With the issuance of this clearance, the distribution of the Yehey! shares via property dividend to Meralco shareholders may finally be effected.

After the property dividend issuance, Manila Exchange will retain 68.21 percent out of its 98-percent stake in Yehey!.

"Listing by way of introduction" allows a company to be a member of the exchange and trade its shares, without an initial public offering, by virtue of the company's already-held shares.

Manila Exchange announced it would distribute a 0.4 property dividend equivalent to 5 centavos for every share held, payable in the form of common shares of Yehey!, to Meralco shareholders.

Yehey! is launching several ranking edge websites to boost its profitability. Yehey! president Donald Lim said.

Yehey! was founded in 1996 by college friends as a search engine. The company's brand and business is online advertising.

Competitiveness body seeking suspension of Malampaya royalties

Cost of electricity a major concern

By Bernard W. Dumaoy

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS Council has pushed its action agenda on energy while business groups renewed calls for cheaper electricity during the opening of the four-day Energy Summit yesterday.

In particular, the NCC called for the suspension or a reduction of government royalties on indigenous resources in the energy like natural gas and geothermal projects.

NCC cochair Cesar B. Bautista said the body pushed a temporary suspension of the royalties, which Malacañang had been considering.

Bautista said the proposal could let its government partially off on the natural gas reserves being exploited under the Malampaya gas-to-power project.

Business groups, including the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Philippine Exporters Confederation, had been petitioning the government in the past several years for the suspension of the royalties, which is seen to result in the immediate lowering of electricity costs.

Local and foreign business chambers and associations had pointed to the high cost of power in the country as a major concern of prospective and existing investors.

Also, the NCC's action agenda on energy calls for the adoption of specific actions that would achieve "real" open access in the power sector, thereby giving industries more options and support in their electricity suppliers.

The agenda also seeks the review of existing power rate structures to find out the true cost of electricity especially in Luzon, the provision of support mechanisms for electric cooperatives to help them achieve better efficiency, the development and use of more renewable energy, and the adoption of a mandatory energy conservation program that involves the public.

NCC supports the Philippine Economic Zone Authority's role in negotiating the energy sector with economic zones.

Finance Energy Secretary Francisco Ferraz, who is the NCC's champion on energy issues, presented the action agenda to the public during the National Competitiveness Summit held in 2006.

Dalisayan, which took part in yesterday's opening forum at the Energy Summit, expressed support for the action agenda.

Dalisayan stood a study made by the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc., which accesses that the largest share of the country's export earnings, that thereof electricity has emerged as the third biggest expense item of exporters.

The study found that power expenses ranged between 8 percent and 35 percent of the total cost of production.

10-yr T-bond rate down 123.8 bps

By Michelle V. Bona

THE 10-YEAR TREASURY bond yesterday finished a lower rate, pulled down by the huge demand from long-term investors who scrambled for limited supply of government securities.

The yield at the 10-year bond reached 11.843 percent, down by 123.8 basis points from the 7.113 percent posted in the last auction in October last year.

Market interest in the long-term bonds was high, mainly boosted by the P37.94 billion worth of tenders. The government, however, accepted only P9.5 billion worth of bids, just raising the amount indicated in its borrowing program for yesterday.

"The deal was very much within our illusions of the Treasury's] expectations," said Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, who also serves as acting national treasurer.

Tan said the government's move to float P500 million worth of global bonds yesterday influenced domestic demand for the 10-year bonds.

Tan said the government was expecting substantial investments from abroad, especially after Moody's investors service last week improved its outlook on the Philippines from "stable" to "positive."

The improved outlook by Moody's was partly due to the government's improving budget condition. The government expects to post a balanced budget this year.

The government had set its budget deficit ceiling for 2007 at P62 billion. But, data showed the actual figure could be much lower.

PAL flies poor children from sickness to health

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CARL AND CLARENCE SOLOMON are about to celebrate their sixth birthday in April.

It sounds like a happy regular events, but not for these twins who were born in 2002 with their heads conjoined.

Thus they are able to live separate lives today is due largely to the Medical Travel Grant, a project of Philippine Airlines Foundation.

Through the grant, the twins and their parents, Arlene and Renato Jr. flown for free from their hometown in Iligan, Region Occidental to Manila in 2003 for months after this, they were sent to the Children's Hospital in Metropolitan in New York City.

Doctors there performed a series of delicate operations separating the twins' 280% fused skull in the separation of the twins in May 2004.

Priority beneficiaries

Filipino children afflicted with congenital heart disease also found their lifeline in PAL, which tied up with the Rotary Club of Life to fly the sick children to hospitals in Australia and the United States.

Ms. Carmen Barbasetz, PAL Foundation executive director, said the travel grant was the first one by PAL to help others with the use of its "unlifting capacity."

PAL Intra continues to transport sick patients needing special care to hospitals with the expertise because it flies to potentially all major destinations in the country and to major international hubs.

Barbasetz said PAL Foundation had even gone beyond just bringing the indigent patients to the hospitals. It also seeks sponsorships for the patients' retained medical care.

Corporate Citizen

It also helped the children settle school and hospitalization they got out of the hospitals.

Life changing

"The grants are truly life changing. We go beyond the conditions because we see the continuous effect of what we have been able to do," Barbasetz told the business.

She said that all charity patients were eligible to apply for a medical travel grant that would enable them to get medical treatment at specialty centers where PAL flies. However, she said, they have to be truly indigent and it should be proven that local hospitals in their areas were not capable of treating their ailments.

Sponsors tapped

"We look at charity patients with serious illnesses who badly need specialty treatment," she explained. "For example, a patient from Zamboanga can apply for a medical travel grant to Manila where he can have a bone marrow transplant because the hospitals in Zamboanga cannot do the operation."

Barbasetz said PAL Foundation depends on sponsorships of its travel grants mainly, which covers the patient and one escort.

Not too many apply for the travel grant because they can not afford the same expenses, such as food and accommodation. PAL Foundation tries to invite sponsors to pick up the tab, but the funds are still very limited.

"We are trying to get more Filipino-American families involved by becoming foster parents of the sick children brought to the United States for treatment," she said. "We have a lot but we are trying to get more."

Drive vs human trafficking

For this year, PAL Foundation is embarking on a new campaign. This time, it is using its flights to help fight human trafficking, particularly through the airlines.

Barbasetz said PAL Foundation had tied up with the Visayan Forum, a nongovernment organization specializing in the fight against human trafficking, to come up with an information materials on the laws against human trafficking in the Philippines.

She added that PAL personnel, especially the cabin attendants, would undergo training on spotting and helping likely victims of human trafficking on board the airline.

"Estimates show that there are about half a million victims of human trafficking within Philippine borders and about 200,000 who go out through the airports. That is still a lot and that's why what we can to help these people," Barbasetz said.

CONJOINED twins Carl and Clarence before their operation. With them are (from left) Cherida Urrutia of Children's Charity Fund, Inc. foundation's Sarmiento and the twins' mother, Arlene Aguirre.

NFA bids out P10B in rice supply contracts

By Aya N. Bacos

THREE COMPANIES HAVE been prequalified by the National Food Authority to supply 150,000 metric tons of imported white rice during a bidding yesterday.

The supply contracts, worth P9.91 billion, covered 25-percent broken well-milled long grain white rice to be imported by the winning bidders who will be selected from among the prequalified firms.

The prequalified bidders were Ayala Global Trade, Lucas Investment Corp., Surplus Int'l., Interasia Int'l., LU Int'l Corp., Multifood, Thai Hua, Dagdiwan, Gramaco, Long An Food, AG Allen and Bindana — all of which are expected to import the required supply from Vietnam and Thailand.

According to the bids, the firms that will be awarded the contracts will be issued within five working days after yesterday's bidding.

Twenty percent of the imports are expected to arrive next month, 40 percent in March and 40 percent in April.

Bid offers ranged from $433.35 a metric ton, inclusive of freight costs, to as high as $498.26 a metric ton.

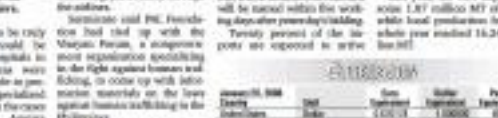
LCCs offer was one of the lowest to arrive at a metric ton for 92,000 MT in February and 26,000 MT in March. It also offered $442 a metric ton for 20,000 MT in April.

Multifood, Dagdiwan, Gramaco, Long An Food, AG Allen, Bindana and Similar offers of $475, $480 and $485 per metric ton for the February, March and April, respectively.

NFA Assistant Administrator Gerardo Bacher said rice prices were high because of tight supply and the rising freight costs.

Bacher said the NFA had been given the authority to import 1.8 million MT of rice this year.

Last year, the NFA requested some 1.87 million MT of rice, while local producers for the whole year reached 16.24 million MT.



Philippine energy future hinges on political will

Front page B1

tatives, which are less than 2 billion metric tons recoverable, according to initial petroleum firms of subscribing its implementation.

If the mood of the summit is anything to go by, however, its organizers are in for a tough uphill climb.

Swimming are a few challenges were already cropping up during the first sessions of the summit's delayed start. Enthusiasm — at least from the audience — left much to be desired, with many nodding off in sleep rather than nodding in agreement with the speakers' urgency.

To be sure, there was an abundance of ideas on the table, both new and old, from various stakeholders. Among the topics set to be discussed during the three-day meeting are energy security, accelerating investments in oil and gas exploration, the promotion of renewable energy, energy conservation and efficiency and alternative fuels, among others.

To each report, the resolutions are numerous.

Leaders of the transport sector, one of the largest consumers of oil polluting fossil fuels, were out in force yesterday not only to lend their support to the summit, but also to stress that they were not ready to give up their old ways without government concessions.

In an interview, Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations president Efren de Leon said that jeepney operators were not against measures to convert conventionally fueled units into diesel-fueled units, so long as government would help them with the cost of converting to cleaner alternatives.

Converting a jeepney in this on LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) would cost P300,000 each," he said in Filipino. "We're not saying the government should give us this money for free, but maybe they can give us a three-year loan which we would eventually repay."

With approximately 500,000 jeepneys plying the nation's roads, De Leon's proposal would involve roughly P150 billion in state loans — almost a tenth of the national budget, even if the dismay which one barely make such more as it stands.

Because transport groups are also a potent political force in this country, it is clear to see that government will have its hands full in trying to reform this sector — just like every other sector that has a stake in the status quo.

On the upside, however, many in the private sector believe that real change is possible, spurred by the urgency of high oil prices and the growing environmental damage caused by traditional fossil fuels.

What is clear is that we need a new direction," said Atlas Development Bank deputy director general Thomas Gruch. "We need to work toward energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy."

The issues are very complex and they require an integrated approach," he added.

Former President Joseph Estrada let will ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to issue an executive order banning the use of energy-inefficient incandescent light bulbs as a first step in the long road toward energy conservation. The problem is that incandescent bulbs are used in millions of incorporated households in the country.

"This is a good place to start," he said, with all the optimism of a first-term lawmaker.

Already, the government's political will is about to be put to the test.

Peso rallies to hit 2-wk high

Front page B1

mance both on the real sector as well as on the financial sector," Tetangco said.

Tetangco said global investors were closely watching what's happening to the US economy.

"There's a wide range of views about the economic outlook in the US but the dominant view seems to be a slowdown. I'm generally not sure a recession. And the slowdown may be over a period of two to three quarters within 2008," he said.

A recession refers to a situation whereby an economy posts two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

"Obviously, the reason for this is that the markets recognize the significant steps that have been taken by the US government to avert a recession and these steps have been in the form of interest rate reduction as well as a fiscal stimulus package that will be put in place," he said.

If the United States would be able to avoid an economic recession this year, Tetangco said the Philippines would benefit in terms of better export demand, overseas remittances and capital flows.

"But even if it's a shallow recession, the impact on the Philippines won't be significant," Tetangco said.

Inflation expected to rise slightly in January

Rate may fall between 3.7% and 4.4%, according to monetary officials

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS expects the country's inflation to edge up slightly, falling between 3.7 and 4.4 percent year-on-year this January due to higher prices of utility and some food items.

National inflation, which measures the average rise in consumer prices based on a basket of goods typically consumed by a Filipino household—stood at 3.9 percent in December a year ago.

"The slight uptick in January compared to December last year is due to price increases in some food items like rice and flour and higher utility rates," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday.

"Meanwhile, stable domestic petroleum prices, fish, meat and lower vegetable prices would help temper inflationary pressures."

Tetangco noted that the BSP's expected inflation for the first month of 2008 is still well within the government's strategic target of between 3 and 5 percent for the full year.

According to GlobalSource, a think tank based in the United States, local consumer prices are expected to reach the upper half of the government's target range within the first semester as a result of a sharp rise in food and fuel prices, which began last year.

Although an increase in inflationary pressures had been noted, analysts still joined in the widely expected 50 basis-point interest rate cut by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas during its Jan. 31 policy rate setting.

Many analysts believe that the BSP would have no choice but to take its cue from the US Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts. Otherwise, the country would continue to attract speculative portfolio inflows that would further lead to the appreciation of the peso.

The US Fed in an emergency move last week slashed its targeted funds rate, or the rate at which banks lend to one another, by a hefty 75 basis points. The Fed is also expected to cut its rates by another 50 basis points on Wednesday.

Many now expect the BSP to likewise cut its overnight borrowing and lending rates by at least 50 basis points to 4.75 percent and 6.75 percent, respectively on Thursday.

Also, some analysts are speculating that the BSP will unbreak some of the funds locked up in its high-yielding special deposit accounts.

Tetangco declined to comment on whether the BSP is considering this option.

"Let's just wait for the MS meeting on Thursday," he said.

Instead of cutting to the overnight borrowing or reverse repurchase agreement, the BSP is now relying on special deposit accounts to mop up excess liquidity in the system.

But funds locked up in this so-called sterilized deposit instrument has actually gone down in the last quarter of 2007 following the central bank's interest rate-cut last year.

From a high of about P488 billion in October last year, total SDA placements had gone down to P366.40 billion as of Dec. 28. This was higher than the P287.82 billion mopped up using the overnight borrowings during the same period.

Corn producers to get ₱1.35-B boost from gov't

By Aroy B. Baviera

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has set aside some P1.35 billion to put up 45 corn drying centers this year to boost local corn production.

"If the Managers 99 focused more on provision of seeds and water through irrigation, now we are looking at having a whole chain of postharvest facilities," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

Yap explained that these corn centers, which are set to be put up starting mid-2008, will each have a capacity to dry 200 metric tons of corn every 16 hours.

These drying centers will help minimize drying costs and corn damage risks, consequently reducing losses and boosting product quality.

The DA said as much as 30 percent of postharvest losses can be attributed to improper drying of corn. The crop should have a maximum moisture content of 14 percent to pass local buyers' standards.

According to Yap, most of the drying centers will be put up in Visayas and Mindanao, where he urged other agriculture stakeholders to invest more.

"We need to provide bigger production support in these nonyellows areas," he said.

Yap explained that this was a necessary move, so that when typhoons hit the country, losses wouldn't be as huge.

The agriculture chief had earlier implemented this task when the DA had started the quick return seed planting program last year in response to the losses brought about by the typhoon Cecilia.

By planting crops in new and relatively typhoon-free farm areas in Visayas and Mindanao, the DA was able to add some 350,000 metric tons of rice and 200,000 metric tons of corn to the full-year agricultural output.

Gov't floats $500M in sovereign bonds

From page B1

day's auction in Manila. "The news on the country's credit (standing) is helping in terms of pulling up interest rate (interest)."

The said proceeds of the bond issue would be used to pay off some of the government's financing obligations for the year.

The government expects to finally post a balanced budget this year, or after 10 years of being in the red. This means the government does not need to borrow to its operational requirements. It only needs to settle maturing liabilities.

The $500 million borrowed commercially from the international capital market is part of the government's total foreign borrowing requirement of $2.5 billion. The larger chunk of $1.3 billion will be drawn from official development assistance extended by multilateral lending institutions, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The $1 billion in foreign borrowings account for 30 percent of the government's total borrowings for this year. The government intends to finance 70 percent of its financing requirement from the domestic market.

The BOP said borrowing more from the domestic market was a debt management strategy to minimize the country's exposure to foreign exchange risks. *With a report from Reuters*

Country may draw $700M from ADB

From page B1

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), Manila Electric Co. (Meralco),

Shares close 0.7% higher

From page B1

over steady. A total of 2.7 billion shares worth P3.5 billion ($85.05 million) changed hands.

"The uncertainty over US interest rates is keeping the market on edge," said Lawrence de Leon of Accel Capital Equities. "If the fed cuts rate by only 25 basis or does nothing at all, Wall Street will be disappointed. A 25 basis point cut may be viewed as not enough to reduce the risk of the US going into recession."

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on Thursday will meet to decide on domestic interest rates amid hopes it will cut borrowing costs for the fifth time in six months.

The government will release economic growth data for 2007 on the same day, with analysts forecasting expansion as high as 7.0 percent.

"The positive fundamentals of the Philippines have failed to help the local market decouple from the rest of the world," said Jose Vicente of ATR Capital Securities. AFP

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Media Partners:

Tribal DDB Worldwide is Global Agency Network of the Year

ADVERTISING AGE NEW YORK announced recently that it has named Tribal DDB Worldwide as its Global Agency Network of the Year. This marks the first time in history that a digital company has ever won the honor.

"I could not be more proud of my Tribal DDB colleagues all around the world. This is a true testament to the exceptional talents that populate our network and to the enabling role that our company," says Worldwide chief executive officer Matt Freeman.

Since its inception, Tribal DDB has consistently ranked at the top of its industry as measured by both revenue growth and awards. This year's impressive roster includes the Gold Lion Network of the Year, a record 17 Cannes Lions awards, 11 major new business wins and over 75 major awards collected across all regions and various categories, including media, direct marketing and mobile.

"Tribal has a great understanding of the DNA of a brand, and they are fearless in the landscape. They really aren't about the medium; they are about the idea," boasts Heath Elo, CEO of BBDO, a Tribal DDB client and former Omnicom Group executive, said.

"Tribal today has become a legitimate force in the global networks, recognized by its clients as a brand partner with the new media agency management owner," said Advertising Age.

"Matt Freeman and his entire Tribal DDB team have done an amazing job in delivering inspiring ideas that are driving growth and value for clients. The whole agency has lived," said Olivia Barnes, president and CEO of DDB Worldwide Group.

"Today's advertising generation has met a formidable match in Tribal DDB. It continues to rise to the challenges of new media through its kinetic creative culture and remarkable client service. We at DDB Philippines take inspiration from such remarkable accomplishments," said Joselito de Joya, chair of DDB Philippines.

Despite the increasingly large size of Tribal's global network, the company touts a collaborative, entrepreneurial approach to serving clients' business. This "collective brain" culture has led to highly effective and awarded work across a multitude of different media and geographies.

"Tribal DDB's insightful, intuitive and dynamic approach to digital media gives today's marketers and advertisers the edge they need in brand building. Their achievement is a testament to the culture of creativity and professionalism that pervades in DDB. 'We are very proud of them," said GILI Chua, group president and chief executive officer of DDB Philippines.

Its Axis to win campaign for Mr. Olivia and its 'ATM' win, "Top 10 Best Campaigns in Asia" and "Top 10 Best Interactive Campaigns in China" by Media and Digital Media respectively in Germany, for lebensbe gann Deutsche Telekom, it handles the entire account, including creative, media, direct, interactive and digital. In South America, just shortly after being named Nokia's digital agency of record for mobile phone division, Tribal was chosen to develop their central idea for its 2008 ad platform over all its partners.

"The idea that they brought back was really different," says Mehli Parcell, senior digital marketing manager for Nokia. "It was much broader than just the digital space. It was something that spread what Nokia was trying to do across platforms."

UP WITH PEOPLE, ZEITS-D WORKING TO HELP CHANGE LIVES

Zeit-D Corporation announced an international, non-profit organization Up With People (UWP) aims to inform, profile and engage corporate and community service activities to educate and help citizens around the globe. On Nov. 13, about 45 participants of the UWP People arrived in the Philippines. The last leg of their world tour is expected 8 months. This year is significant because it is the first time a Filipino delegate, Hannah Fernandez-Perez, joins the group. It is likewise the first time the organization visits the country. The Philippine Association for Citizens with Developmental and Learning Abilities (PACDLD) is one of the first destination where volunteers spend 2 days. Local legend the children singing songs for them with storytelling sessions and helping the kids with their arts and crafts. Host were visits to the Origon Foundation, Assumption College and the Gawad Kalinga site in Bagumbayan. UWP volunteers started building houses for the poor with Gawad Kalinga workers. Also held are workshops with Gawad Kalinga and Nayong Pilipino this next day. UWP participants also hosted Habitat for Humanity and go homes in Pasay. 47 Y-B staged lead to delegates of the organization and brought home to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center. On Nov. 21 and 22, UWP visited Cory Aquino foundation. UWP also taught children in Bethel Bible College and the Makinda School Foundation Dec. 4 and 5, respectively. UWP held its main show on Manila at Theatre Dec. 1 and 2. These performances were in collaboration with Zeit-D Corp. and PC Cola.

Free wireless mic with 'Todo Pamaskong Birit!'

STILL THINKING OF WHAT TO give to that special person in your life? Why not give the latest in videoke entertainment?

Zillre Boulevard sells out the red carpet with its "Todo Pamaskong Birit!" promo. From December to January you stands can avail of special discounts plus a free wireless microphone for every purchase of a Zillre Boulevard TSB 300 package.

Boulevard is the only videoke system that contains 177 hits in OPM songs in addition to its 1,275 of latest to the greatest English songs. For business, the system optimizes the use of MIS technology, from automatic song experience singing with back-up singers, unusual voice, orchestras accompaniment and real-living sounds this technology also makes it the best recording system in the market today.

Moreover, you can save personalize the system's background image by uploading up to 100 pictures through its USB port. With this choice-

of can features, hand-made celebrations will no longer be limited to just a photo album, but instead taken on screen.

Zillre Boulevard is manufactured by TJ Media Co. Ltd of Korea, and is exclusively distributed by Beethoven Corp. For more information, call 336-8096, 366-9410 or log on to www.soundsvideoke.com.

MSI-ECS SWEEPS AWARDS AT HP PARTNERS' NIGHT JANUARY 10

MSI-ECS, a leading distributor of information technology products in the Philippines, received a total of 11 awards in the recently concluded HP Partners Night held Jan. 10 at the SMX Philippine Plaza Manila. MSI-ECS' outstanding performance and invaluable support to the HP business resulted in the garnering of nine product-related awards, namely: Distributor of the Year, Wholesaler Outstanding HP Workstation, Outstanding ISV Wholesaler and Outstanding PSG Wholesaler all awards for 2007. MSI-ECS also took home the most coveted Wholesaler of the Year award. MSI-ECS has been an authorized distributor and partner of HP since the inception of its IT distribution in the country. To date, MSI-ECS is distributing a wide range of HP products, consumer and commercial desktops, consumer and commercial notebooks, servers, printers, and supplies. Shown in the winning team (left to right) are CEO Jimmy T. Go. For more information and other inquiries on HP products, call MSI-ECS at 688-3000/688-3000 or log on to www.msi-ecs.com.ph.

'Kenny's open '08': Food, fun and fitness

FITNESS ACTIVITIES, MOUTHingly delicious and healthy food, plus a series of fun-packed adventures these are what event everyone at "Kenny's Open '08" on Feb. 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Rockwell Tent in Makati.

Admission is free! Gather your family and friends and get set for a day filled with everything that's definitely good for you. It is gourmet eat to be an exhilarating event, so come in your most comfortable attire or wear it out, get out and get ready to move!

The Rockwell Tent will be transformed into a hip and sleek hub where refreshing colors will be splashed over a pulsating beat. Kenny's signature symbol, the sage and the freshness of Kenny's dishes. The bustling area will also become a showroom to present Kenny's new dishes such as steaks and pizzas that will soon be part of the menu. Moreover, you can save personalize the system's background image by uploading up to 100 pictures through its USB port. With this choice-

Shouldn't you want to be one of the first to discover and taste Kenny's vision of deliciously healthy gourmet offerings?

To add excitement and get everyone grooving to a tunes active lifestyle, Kenny's model and endorser Marc Nelson will host the event. Get up close and personal with Marc and as host Amanda Griffin who will join the fitness routines and will gladly share their secrets on feeling good and looking good. Kids will surely love the Kiddie Corner where Upinhouse will hold fun fitness classes just for them.

And as a special treat for Kenny customers, free food coupons, which can be used during the event, are up for grabs at any of Kenny's 33 branches for a minimum single receipt purchase of P500.

For more details, visit the Kenny Rogers Roasters nearest you or log on to www.kennyrogers.ph.

Mandaluyong Jaycees elects new president

THE MANDALUYONG JAYCEES INC. (JCI Mandaluyong Inc.) elected Dr. Patrick Kiats T. Asanza, well-known academician and distinguished civic leader, as its president and chair of the board of directors during its recent general membership meeting held at the Celebrity Sports Club. Other officers elected were: Buddy Belmonte, EVP, external; Sherry Gershon Wenceslao, EVP, internal; Alvin Estrada, VP community; Michel Wong, VP management; Noni Ambrosio, VP business; Judy Bustamante, VP investor-relations; Alvin Lazaro, secretary general; Sonia Godin, auditor; Charlie Member and past president Arlie Hapang served as Chair of the Commission on Elections.

Asanza is expected to lead the Mandaluyong Jaycees to greater heights. He is an excellent administrator and a top-notch sales and marketing man. He finished his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from the University of the Philippines under a straight Presidential Scholarship Grant. He also holds post-graduate diplomas from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), the University of California, and the Harvard University. He has authored six books. A former UP Student Council chair, his outstanding biography is featured in the 19th Edition of the Marquis Who's Who in the World.

Asanza is a recipient of the prestigious 100th Lingkod Bayan Award, conferred by the Civil Service Commission and the Presidential Awards for his outstanding contributions as a civil servant. During the same year, he was recognized as a Distinguished UP Alumnus in the field of social service.

ASANZA

Mandaluyong Jaycees Inc. is an affiliate of the JCI Philippines. JCP national president Sig. Lenen congratulated Asanza on his election as president of the Mandaluyong Jaycees while Asanza expressed full support to the plans and programs of the national organization.

UST ARTS & LETTERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HEVE UP FOR 2011

Newly elected UST Arts and Letters Alumni Association President Anna T. Campos (AB Journalism '71), formerly head of Public Relations at Globe, spearheads an extensive alumni relations project for all alumni of the Faculty of Arts and Letters in preparation for the university's quadricentennial in 2011. Campos says, among the revitalized alumni association of the faculty are the university of Hawaii, inspired by a Catholic Education, can help communities and committed branch excellence. During the recent planning conference of the association that followed the induction of officers and board members, Campos and the rest of the Arts and Letters alumni as gatekeepers of communication are thankful for the coming 400 years celebration of UST. All has produced the best leaders in broadcast, print and electronic media, as well as in the humanities and social sciences and as such, is in the best position to do the awareness campaign not only for Arts and Letters alumni, but for all Thomasians the world over," Campos remarked. A concern in the corporate affairs branches of Globe, Campos brings to his position as AVA and Letters Alumni Association president an well-seasoned experience in media during the time, talent and treasures of the illustrious legion of 60 graduates since 1967 to this present. The Faculty of Arts and Letters was founded in 1911, as the forerunner of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, founded in 1916. Shown are (from left, front row) executive director Nancy Tadiaro, dean Armando de Joya, Noel Wilson, Judge Pedro Magdangal, Lolo Jose, Ma. Lourdes Jaguscio, Armando Cuesta, Fr. Rudel Ariguz, OP, Fr. Evelyn Enriquez, faculty secretary Cora Baron, (front left, back row) Editor Damian Gerard Jose Bellaga, Rector Cesar Ten, Shirley Santamaria, Clarence Ignacio, director Angelo Peralta, Bing dela Cruz, Lynsey Ong-Yap, Ma. Asuncion dela Cruz, Robert Angeles, Marissa Grio-Lynsey to Philip Gan and Aimee Cabrera.

NEW DENTIST

DR. DEVELBEE Anne de la Cruz

Abelica Global launches longstanding brand

ABELICA GLOBAL, AN INTERNATIONAL organization of independent, international consulting firms, introduced November 2007 its rebranded identity for the multi-company network formerly known as Multinet Global. The Philippines' member firm is Solutions Inc. which offers a full range of consulting expertise and experience in the areas of employee benefits, health care management and actuarial services.

"We are excited to launch our new identity," commented Dominique Pierrugues, Abelica Global Chair. "The members of Abelica Global have taken a number of significant steps to refocus our network, in order to meet increasing cross-border client needs in our service areas, which include employee benefits, investments, insurance, and healthcare.

For more information, log on to www.abelicaglobal.com.

Come and Join
exclusive
Property Offering

South Lake Village @ ETON CITY

The First Residential Island Lot Development in the Country.

The Palm in Dubai. Lake Las Vegas in Nevada. Foster City in California. These are the next-generation cities, masterplanned on a massive scale, in progressive countries in the world. These developments boast world-class and sophisticated concepts and infrastructure to complement the cutting-edge lifestyle of the 21st century.

Now, taking inspiration from these new world wonders, Eton Properties Philippines, Inc. introduces one of the biggest and most ambitious developments in the country – ETON CITY.

The centerpiece of this world-class city is SOUTH LAKE VILLAGE – the country's first and only community of high-end exclusive islands surrounded by a massive 35-hectare man-made lake. A proud product of nature, technology and modern engineering, these island lots raise the bar in exclusivity, security, and privacy.

Situated in a sprawling, almost 1,200 hectare, property in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, ETON CITY is masterplanned to nourish you with a complete city lifestyle in a nature-rich, suburban setting. It boasts high-end residential enclaves, a world-class business district, a championship golf course, and first class leisure, entertainment, and shopping hubs effectively making it "the Makati of the South."

ETON CITY. Best Location in Sta. Rosa

MOTORING

TOYOTA markets Vios as the next gen compact saloon.

INNOVA is THP's top-selling vehicle.

GLOBAL CAR WARS

Toyota 'welcomes' GM's No. 1 spot

GM retains No. 1 spot globally; Toyota likes it that way

FORTUNER is the third top selling vehicle of Toyota Philippines.

By Tonio R. Soliman

THE AUTOMOTIVE BLOG last week was that US automaker General Motors Corp.'s "solid sales growth" gave it a slim lead over Japanese carmaker Toyota Motor Corp. in 2007 global vehicle sales, allowing it to keep its top spot for the 77th year.

GM sold 9,369,524 vehicles last year—a measly lead of 2,000 over Toyota's 9.366 million vehicles sold last year. Automotive business analysts are expecting a more intense rivalry this year as the two compete for emerging markets like China and India.

TOYOTA B2-3

WINDSHIELD
CRACK
REPAIR
HOT REPLACEMENT EMISSION CTRS
MANILA MIDWEST

TOYOTA
moving forward
Imagine a beautiful moment.
Our small planet is like a borderless gallery.
In it are a million art pieces, created by the world.
I am a part of it. I am alive.
VIOS
Toyota 500 THOUSAND
Progressive Design
The new VIOS has an all new design you can see and feel.
Fabulous form and function to match every beautiful moment.
ALL NEW
VIOS
My Design. My Pride.

MAZDA'S biggest crossover/SUV is revamped, the CX-9

THE CX-9'S 3.7-liter DOHC V6 engine

INSIDE THE CX-9, plush leather, tilt/telescope steering wheel, it's even climate control

Mazda Cx-9: Zoom-zoom with extra room

ON THE ROAD

Andie Arevilla Mendoza

2008 THE MAZDA CX-9 deserves superlatives? Yes, in the sense that it is Mazda's biggest passenger vehicle, has the largest engine ever in a Mazda and the largest wheelbase in the crossover/SUV class. Moreover, it won the Motor Trend Sport Utility Award for 2008 and was included by Automobile Magazine in its All Stars 2008 list of the 10 best cars aside from being voted the North American Truck of the Year by 43 motoring journalists in the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

The CX-9 also deserves superlatives for its good looks. Sleek, stylishly sculpted and armoured with a sharply raked windshield, it defies the boxy traditional of its class yet screams sporty-utility. You see, the base 20-inch rims showed right in the corners are the CX-9's most eye-catching feature, revealing its room across capability and adding muscle to an already powerful package.

Upgrade

Built on the same platform as the Mazda6 sedan and launched on the market in 2007, the CX-9 has been upgraded for 2008 with a bigger engine displacement, from 3.6 liters to a 3.7-liter 24-valve DOHC V6 with variable valve timing. The upgrade increased horsepower from 263 to 273 bhp and upped max torque from 249 lb-ft to 270 lb-ft/4,500 rpm, a welcome boost for the CX-9's size and weight enjoyed by two tons.

Despite its bulk and length—nearly 200 inches long, it is almost a foot longer than the Nissan Murano—the CX-9 is surprisingly light on its feet and doesn't feel too large or heavy on the road. It turns in nicely and remains relatively flat while cornering, thanks to the four-strong V6 engine harnessed from the Ford Edge and to the suspension system. Independent MacPherson strut up front and 3-Link multilink at the rear) with stabilizer bars fore and aft plus traction control, Dynamic Stability Control and Rollover Stability Control. The CX-9 is not tuned for sports performance, yet it has lots of low-range torque; some sporty traits and is responsive only has its share.

Spirited performance

Some credit for the CX-9's spirited performance should also go to the 6-speed gate-type manu-matic transmission that changes gears smoothly and has a sport shift for more enthusiastic driving. While you are driving, the gear you're in is shown via a digital number on the speedometer. The structural rigidity of the CX-9's unibody contributes to the supple ride and stellar handling. Brakes are also top-notch with 4-wheel disc brakes with ABS and brake assist provide plenty of stopping power.

While the CX-9 drives like a car on the highway it handles more like an SUV and its 2,952 kg curb weight is a bit restrictive in low-speed city driving—although the power assisted rack-and-pinion steering with engine speed-sensing assist makes the CX-9 easy to maneuver in tight spots. Its steering wheel, tilt/telescope, is also a 3.7 meters.

Minivan space

The CX-9's convenience interior makes it an attractive alternative for prospective minivan buyers. It offers minivan-like space for seven adults (including driver) and 27.2 cubic feet of cargo area with the third row seats up. Cargo room increases to 46 cubic feet with the third row folded and to more than 100 cubic feet when both the second and third row seats are down.

The interior of the CX-9 is just as stylish as its exterior with a dashboard layout like a sports sedan's, four gauges with silver trim rings, wood inserts for the interior console and door panels, well bolstered, sport-height leather seats, a tilt/telescope steering wheel with audio and cruise controls, tri-zone climate controls and a 6-CD in-dash with MP3 capability and six speakers. A tilt and slide moonroof is standard.

There is ample leg room in front and in the second row of seats, although in the third row it is cramped, good only for passengers on short trips. Visibility is on the rear is rather poor, making tie work, during parking manoeuvres, than the CX-9's forward-hearing) head-up display sensors or rear-parking sensor.

5 stars

The CX-9 earned five out of a possible five stars for both the front and side crashes in US government crash tests and a four-star rollover rating. Aside from the previously cited seven airbags, front side impact airbags and side air curtains with rollover protection for all three rows of seats, 3-point safety belts for all seating positions, front safety belt pretensioners with force limiters, remote keyless entry and a burglar alarm system.

Bottom line, the Mazda CX-9 GT (P2,199M) offers zoom-zoom with more room plus electronics and panache to match.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: *Bike. Those fins where you don't know what you're doing.*

GM'S top seller is an Aveo sedan

Toyota 'welcomes'. . .

From page B2-1

But the No. 2 places is worse, isn't consolidating.

Media interest

Associated Press reported that despite the media interest in the rivalry, Toyota said it was not interested in the numbers game, and has even expressed worries about a possible backlash reminiscent of the "Japan bashing" in the 1980s and '90s should they dethrone GM in its home turf, the United States.

Toyota Motors Philippines Pow Wee President for Marketing and Sales Daniel Sales said they were cautious that sense of being No. 1 worldwide started playing in peoples' minds, the mandate of Toyota is to local distributors has been not to focus on quantity, but to continue producing quality cars and good customer service.

No pressure

Ido stressed that Team has been no pressure from headquarters to take the top spot, but they "gave us specific targets and figures for market share. It doesn't matter to THE what rank we're in as long as we're able to meet our targets."

He added, "They always tell us to be humble in any achievement. They don't want failure that we're making cheat in GM. The mother company is so quiet about it."

Ido said that no matter what global rank Toyota ends up in, it wouldn't have much of an effect in the local auto market.

GM Philippines' local bestseller in 2007 was the Aveo sedan, followed by the Optra and Spark. GM could not be reached for comment as of press time.

Top seller

Toyota's Innovas remains the top seller of all vehicles sold in the country.

In 2007, the top three Toyota vehicles sold were Innova (20,549 units), Vios (8,717) and Fortuner (7,218).

CHERY Spark—a 5-door hatchback 1.0 liter with MT at P495,000—is GM's third best seller

Analysts are expecting Peso and GM to be more competitive with the dollar's devaluation relative to most major world currencies. Some are also wondering whether the distinction of being the world's automotive capital would still belong to Detroit in the near future.

THE CHEVROLET Optra's come look includes a sleeker headlamp and 15" alloy wheel design with an improved chrome grille and chrome inserts on its side protector moldings.

MOTORSCOPE

Mercedes-Benz C-Class voted most popular car

THE MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS HAS

won the accolade of Germany's largest vote for the most popular car by a wide margin. Accordingly the motoring organization Adac has presented its sought-after "Yellow Angel 2008" award to this Stuttgart mainstay public favorite.

The "Yellow Angel" awards, which the Adac presents annually for outstanding performance, are named after the nickname given to this Adac's friendly breakdown service personnel and are among Europe's most sought after motoring awards. Consumers find them a valuable decision-making guide, as criteria such as unsurpassed economy, performance, safety and environmental compatibility also play a part in the selection process.

The vote was between 36 vehicles which newly entered the market in 2007. Around 340,000 people cast their votes and second and third place to the Mercedes-Benz C-Class by a wide margin were the Opel Astra, Europe's largest motoring association—it has around 16 million members—revealed this clear-cut result with the "Yellow Angel 2008" award for Germany's favorite car.

The C-Class has set new standards in its segment since its market launch at the end of March 2007. In addition to an appealing design and hallmark Mercedes refinement, it also offers the latest technical advances. These include, for example, the agility control package with situation-responsive shock absorber control, the Intelligent Light System with its new dirtle and lighting functions and the anti-theft security occupant protection system ProTect.

Germany's favorite car is also very much a bestseller. With 351,000 examples sold in 2007, unit sales of the saloon increased by 32 percent.

The C-Class has already collected several awards for its exceptional status in the mid-range segment. The readers of Auto Bild voted it the most attractive saloon. The motoring magazine "auto, motor und sport" declared it the most appealing medium-sized car and 350,000 participants in Europe's largest individual survey voted it Europe's favorite car with the 2007 "Carwine" Internet Auto award.

Own a brand-new Volvo at 14% off

VOLVO LAUNCHES ITS MOST during price offer yet on 4 of its most captivating models with the amazingly generous 14 percent slash off the regular prices of the Volvo S80, V50, S60 and XC70. But better hurry because this incredible offer is until Feb. 14 only!

Continuing its New Year welcome, Volvo comes up with this unbelievable offer to own any car of the four Volvo models they have a Best range. From the compact Volvo S60 to the rugged crossover vehicle Volvo XC70, each Volvo enthusiast can take it to pick with an extra-rich incentive—he gets a brand-new Volvo while getting a whopping slash off the 14 percent discount offered. Aside from this already amazing offer, you also get a free 3-year warranty, free 1-year comprehensive insurance, free 3-year LTO registration and free 24-hour roadside assistance.

From its elegant and compact exterior to its contemporary interior with the world's first free-floating center console, every inch of the S40 is refined by the Scandinavia. This spacious and supremely comfortable sedan is engineered to perform with its 2.4-liter 5-cylinder engine spewing 170 bhp. The Volvo S40's engine balances power with efficiency, with innovations like variable valve timing and common rail direct injection all combining to deliver lively performance and smoothest fuel consumption.

Everything else is in right place with the V50's brilliant combination of under-seated luxury, ingenious storage and innovative design. Its 2.4-liter 5-cylinder engine comes with the talent to convert your weekday to a weekend anytime you want. Discover its gusty driving with its 2.4L, 5-cylinder, 5-speed Geartronic adaptive Transmission or enjoy its 170 horses pulling you to enjoy the outdoors in stylish versatility.

The sleek and sporty exterior gives road presence that's second to none while you'll find a cabin with an environment that is cleaner inside than out. Offerings like moonroof, the 360 watt hi-fi and engineering—its 5-cylinder, 180 bhp engine supporting the passion while its multilink rear axle gives the ride.

For those seeking adventure anytime, anywhere, the Volvo XC70 AWD is their perfect companion, giving an ordinary journey an extraordinary feel. Aside its rugged good looks to smart and clever functions that will keep every trip an enjoyable experience. Among the highlights the XC70 is its powerful 210 horses and 6D Speed adaptive Geartronic transmission that changes gears and enjoys the city with your family, all and cargo in the XC70's versatile shell.

Whichever Volvo you choose, you can be sure that you've made the most intelligent decision. For just like the Scandinavian design pioneered by one of the world's greatest engines exposed to uncompromising safety and security for you.

TRANSPORT TRIVIA

By Emerson Cuna

Vanity license plates

PREMIUM

HOW DO YOU LIKE A CLAIM-to-fame, attention-getter vehicle plate where your lucky numbers or favorite number combinations, your name initials even, endorsed on it? Actually in no time you can get one. And we call it your vanity license plate.

The Land Transportation Office website defines a vanity license plate (VLP) as the one that "refers to the optional motor vehicle (MV) plate for the purpose of establishing personalized ideology of the motor vehicle to the registered owner."

There are three categories of vanity plates available for Filipino motorists: limited edition, premium and select edition.

The limited edition consists of base or maximum of six characters, either all numeric or all alphabet. Examples are 999999, AAAAA, WWWWWW and 8888. These plates can be purchased through public auction with a **floor or starting price at P50,000.**

LIMITED edition

Pegged at floor price of P15,000 is **the premium edition, which consists of** six characters, a combination of numeric-alpha (reverse of the current license plate number). For example, 555 MOM, 880 NEL and 100 FE.

The select edition, on the other hand, consists of a minimum of three to a maximum of six characters. Examples are HAHA, MADRE, JETSET, LOLA and WINNER. Starting price is at P30,000.

SAMPLE vanity plate: Select edition

A single vanity plate is issued in line **with the regular plate** and is installed at the space allotted for the rear license plate of the vehicle by superimposing or placing it on top of the regular license plate.

It will be issued to the vehicle owner and shall belong to him with an effective period for life unless revoked by LTO due to violation and noncompliance to existing roadworthy vehicle registration laws and regulations.

But the physical service life of the plate shall be within a period of five years. After which, the plate **owner shall request** for re-issuance of new plate bearing the same alphanumeric combination upon payment of reissuance fee.

To get your own vanity plate, proceed to MID-Computer Section of any LTO **branch and accomplish the Appli**cation for Vanity Plates form. You could also download the form at http://www.lto.gov.ph/downloads.html.

Payment must be made on the time of ordering and after five working days after your payment is received, your plate will be sent to your house address.

Not all vehicles though are eligible to **make use of the vanity plates.** Check with the nearest LTO office in your area for inquiries or log on to http://www.lto.gov.ph/vanityreg.html for more information of vanity plates.

Reference: http://www.lto.gov.ph

SUZUKI motorshow

FULL THROTTLE AT SUZUKI NATIONWIDE MOTORSHOW

Big bikes for a big name

RISING TO THE TOP
BUILDING ON A PLATFORM OF ACHIEVEMENT.
CREATING A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE.

THE NEW KIA CARENS
WITH CRDi DIESEL ENGINE

COMPACT VAN/MPV OF THE YEAR
CAR OF THE YEAR (COTY) PHILIPPINES AWARDS

KIA CARENS HAS ALSO BEEN AWARDED THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE RATING
★★★★★

AVAIL OF KIA'S SPECIAL TRADE-IN DEALS
(ANY BRAND / MODEL)
THRU SELECTED KIA DEALERS / OUTLETS

Actual unit may vary from photo

DRIVING IN METRO MANILA

10 road hazards to look out for

By Charles E. Bulosan

STREET NAMES change while new car models keep showing up (and make the current ones look old and unfashionable) but there are also a number of things on Metro Manila's roads that seem to resist change.

The writer still finds road hazards and in fact, listed 10 of them which motorists should always be mindful of, especially if being headlined in the next television news flash or hot spot of the globe.

1 Brakes. With this one, you can't blame bus drivers to feel invincible on the road. Car manufacturers these days don't even bother with them and you'll probably end up with a many case of crumpled fender or missing bumper. And don't think the situation is any better in the Philippines. Manila Development Authority planned it so generous that they would not bother you since a lot of bus drivers have a knack for crossing the other side of the yellow lane just as comes, never either buses or head first to the next gathering of potential passengers.

2 Trucks. Just like a lot of buses and jeeps, a number of truck drivers love to bully those around them—breaking suddenly or making a lane change without looking original, like extra careful when following garbage or dump trucks because they seldom cover their load, which sometimes fall off and hit your windshield like a bullet. The fact that they are also wide and fill up most your front view is another reason motorists are advised not to tail them.

3 Tricycles. Don't be too confident than since you are driving on a main road or highway that you won't encounter these three-wheelers always keep a watchful eye as they seem to pop up out of nowhere.

4 Motorcycles. Yes, they are thin, agile and could weave between lanes. Sadly, a lot of riders don't realize that they may be on the blind side of the drivers whose vehicles that they intend to pass or overtake.

5 Broken taillights. The writer has encountered so many cars, trucks and motorcycles with missing or broken taillights. This is dangerous since a lot of roads here in Metro Manila are without proper lighting and the possibility of incoming one of them is quite high, especially late at night or in the wee hours of the morning.

6 Crossing pedestrians. This writer is refraining in these pedestrians who hate to cross it out. They would rather risk being hit by a speeding car than head to the nearest the nearest pedestrian overpass. Also keep in mind that they have a knack for wearing the most dark clothing or close to an unlit portion of the road, which could really ruin your travel scare.

7 U-turn slot barriers. Every corner you find them, we watch on TV how one enterprise would dare into one of the barriers located on U-turn slots. The MMDA people would always blame the driver for overspeeding or being sleepy or drunk. This may be true but the fact is, these barriers are really unfair on night (especially when there is no ample street light-ing) because their striped paints or reflectors are already covered with dust, dirt and grime. A flashing warning lights or better reflectors would be helpful. (like those found in some motorcycles).

8 Don't use your lights. Save to dicator light a activated to signal those around you the direction in which you intend to turn, or to switch base you like to switch. The problem is, this writer has encountered so many motorists, especially on highways and expressways who do not use or don't know when to activate their turn lights, which is not only dangerous to the vehicle at the back but also to the one driving on the other lane.

9 Headclubbers. You see more likely to see these kinds during stop light or traffic congestion, because of their height and their weapon disregard of safety (there they are sometimes in the path of the vehicle), motorists are advised to keep a sharp eye on them especially when at times to move.

10 Crossing animals. Dogs the urban dogs do and don't expect them to stop, look and listen or to oncoming traffic (although this writer has encountered a number of dogs and even cats who know how to cross streets). Be mindful not only of other vehicles, pedestrians and structures on the road but also those four-legged creatures lurking on the roadside.

Where tomorrow is headed

LOOKING AT THE AUTOMOTIVE future is always a windy thing as people gazing into crystal balls tend to practice a little imagination, a little movement. It is tempting to paint the motoring tomorrow as our own fantasy world. Some will dream of a vehicular utopia, where carbon signatures and automobile consumption defines the new way of life.

Others will lean toward a picture painted in a post-Apocalyptic model, where scanty fuels petroleum were used a check elemental chaos] before the earth into extinction. It is only when we look at the facts and the trends that a more or less accurate peek into the future of how we will continue our relationship with the car.

The first thing we have to accept is that the car will change drastically over the next few decades. Already the small, efficient and cultivation economical cars are becoming more and more popular across markets around the world. Whether industrialized nation or third world banana republic, the rules of the game are changing in order to answer from the powers of economic and ecological pressure.

Out-of-the-box solutions

A majority of the concept vehicles showing the current auto shows take the idea of the shrinking car even further. The single seat, upright half-shell motorized wheelchair powered by spent cooking oil, apple scores or flat soda seems to be the trend. Kidding aside, one of the key mobility solutions never looked so quality and drama.

Performance is no longer just horsepower, torque. O-60 kph times and cornering g forces. Fuel consumption is as big a part of the motivating numbers game now. The ability to deliver more mileage in less time is seen just as easy to the consumer as acceleration, grip and top speed. To most of us who use

MY DRIFT

Andre Fabio

ten on a daily basis, this is already the greatest consideration.

The rush to find alternative fuel sources is an all-out, free for all right now but a trend is starting to become clear. The stop-gap solution to carbon emissions and fuel scarcity is the internal combustion engine mated to an electric motor. The hybrid engine concept already available in certain markets. But bets are on a diesel hybrid becoming the standard engine configuration in the future because of the increasing production levels of renewable sources of diesel like palm and coconut oil.

The hybrid duel will take decades to complete; oil dependence on fossil fuel will eventually have to a full stop. The users that that petroleum reserves are in store in unmet dozens any part of long-term, future viability as our primary automotive fuel source. We will run out of oil eventually, but who ultimately doom the automobile? We can take a hint from the billions spent toward the development of the hydrogen fuel cell as a replacement of the eventual energy source that will take over.

Hydrogen fuel cell equation

The simplicity of the hydrogen fuel cell equation is poetic always, and seems to answer all the world's questions about fuel consumption and carbon emissions. Take simple: hydrogen, probably the most common element in the known universe, and pure is enough a top notch fuel cell equation. Mix nature's oxygen in the right ratio and create pure water, vapor into the environment as exhaust gas.

Somewhere in the chemical reaction added by the fuel cell, tap the electrical by-product of the reverse electrolysis. Store electrical energy in a battery and use to power a direct-drive electric motor. Drive along with a clear conscience and no-cost cheaper environment.

Beyond the bio-diesel hybrids, the hydrogen fuel cell and the wheelchair-powered vehicle, the concept of the car's future economic future is as good as mine. The line between science fiction and technological fact is being pushed on a daily basis. The next great idea may just be already in the mind of a young engineer working at any one of the world's engineering giants.

Let's just hope he lives to drive as you and I do. Some future vehicle design can't be used for a human driver altogether and use a bio-mind like concept in manage traffic and safety—Jean that's another column's worth of complicating right there, sometime in the future.

MOTORSCOPE

Nissan unleashes Fun Factor

WASHINGTON DC PHILIPPINES INC. UNLEASHES "Fun Factor" to start off the new year. From Jan. 18 to March 31, customers can delight in amazing low monthly deals for the Sentra and the X-Trail, with free weekend getaways where they can indulge in the breathtaking scenery of the country's renowned tourist spots.

"We are extending our gratitude to Nissan loyalists who have supported and enhance the brand. Nissan Fun Factor is our way of saying thank you and cheers to the New Year," says Shinmin Ko, AVP for Sales and Marketing Division.

Nissan Fun Factor doubles the fun in owning the Nissan you've always wanted. For the young in spirit, the Sentra meets the demands of daily driving with its combination of reliability, world-class power and handling comfort. Dubbed as "The classic drive, the Sentra is an ideal start to your motoring dreams. For the spirited owner, the X-Trail guarantees fun, power and economy in a unique package. Its extreme off-road performance mated with an inspiring interior comforts make the D-Trail the perfect companion for both on-and off- road adventures.

And for the accomplished spirit in tune with the finer things in life, the all-new Cefiro from Nissan means of transport and transcends to a mode of luxury living. Such exquisiteness prevails in the Maxima. Teana and Serena, as attested by its numerous awards and accolades earned by these vehicles, the most recent being the Nissan's Best Interior Design title awarded during the 2005 Car of the Year Awards.

Nissan Fun Factor offers low monthly plans with free LTO registration, chattel mortgage fee waiver, insurance for the Nissan Sentra and the X-Trail. There are also weekend getaway packages available for the Nissan Sentra 1.3 and 1.6.

Owning a Nissan has never been this much fun with exciting free trips to Subic, Tagaytay or Palawan included in every purchase. Find your favorite Nissan dealer and experience Fun Factor.

New record is 1,432.4 km

A NEW PUBLIC ENDURANCE RECORD was set on Jan. 18 in the Petron Xtra Mile Challenge Champions Edition with the winning car logging a total distance of 1,432.4 kilometers on one tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Traversing the lengthof Luzon from Bangui just west to the resort town of Pagudpud in Ilocos Norte, all the way down to the southernmost tip in Matnog, Sorsogon, and then touching as far west to Boac in Marinduque, Romblon to the town of San Fernando, Camarines Sur, brothers Emilio "Toonie" and Emmanuel "Manny" Dayrit broke their own prior record in a Honda Jazz 1.2 VTEC automatic transmission sponsored by Honda Cars Kalookan.

By overcoming the superior inertia, energy losses and friction of Petron Xtra Unleaded and the CVT (continuously variable transmission) technology of the Honda Jazz, Team Dayrit Boomerang was able to reaffirm its dominance in Petron Xtra's famous fuel economy marathons on.

Coming in at second place was The Philippine Star team of Jeff Reyes and Lester Bunoan, logging a distance of 1,323.3 km. In third place, at 1,218.3 km, was the Boxythebox team of Herman Echeverria and Delfin Perez, assistant business editors of The Philippine Star and Manila Bulletin, respectively.

The other teams competing in the Petron Xtra Mile Challenge Champions Edition also logged impressive distances, making it all the way from the take-off point in Bangar, Ilocos Norte down to Matnog, Sorsogon and backtracking through Bicolandia.

Reyes and Perez did the Players of Motor Fuel Consumption at 1,211.2 km. Pachoko and George Ramirez logged 1,200.2 km. Louis and Sheila Kasilag reached 1,067.2 km, while Jess Garcia and Joseph Javier (MVP) did 58 liters from the at 1,053.1 km. The team of Mike and Erma Asuncion was unable to finish due to a minor accident that caused some damage to their engine.

Said Petron president Ramon Ang at the Xtra Mile Challenge press that this superior formulation of Petron Xtra Unleaded delivers the best combination of performance and fuel efficiency. It encourages ordinary motorists to be more conscious about fuel economy as getting the most out of every liter of fuel is key to fuel conservation.

The brainchild of this Petron Xtra Mile Challenge is the Filipino consumer. "Every one can go the Xtra Mile."

All teams drove a Honda Jazz 1.5 automatic transmission, with Honda Cars Kalookan, Honda Cars Quezon City and Honda Cars Diana as the official car sponsors. Supporting the event were RoadID, Pandesal, Caribou Safety Equipment, Speedtalk, Top Gear magazine, and Gadgets magazine. The results were certified by official observers from the national auto club, the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) and the national motorsports corporation, the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi).

Subaru Club rocks Ayala Center

THE SUBARU CLUB PHILIPPINES HELD IT'S first grand outdoor event in a spectacular fashion by parading their Subarus right in the middle of Ayala Center last Friday during the peak of the shopping and rush hours.

Formost generations of the legacy MPG, GT and Forester even at their car show-land packed at the Tent in Glorietta 2 while their owners party with their fellow Subaru enthusiasts. An organized group of Subaru customers and enthusiasts, the SCP is officially recognized by Subaru Group. Their exclusive club factor of Subaru in Southeast Asia.

Ayala Center shoppers were treated to a display of various models of Subaru cars that were proudly paraded by their owners who were meeting their fellow enthusiasts as part of club's regular activities. Those that did have their private car club functions and regular event in Glorietta 2 and Ayala Center was only to willingly hold such a dynamic gathering.

The event was organized by the Subaru Club Philippines led by Club Erich Lingad and President Gilbert Carrasco. Lingad and Carrasco spearheaded the formation of the Subaru Club leading to its subsequent first year.

Both were believe that the main driving force of the club is the presence of its members for their Subaru vehicles. "The SCP brings together passionate Subaru owners and promotes enjoyable and safe driving of their vehicles," Lingad said. Carrasco, on the other hand, explained that the club is more than just about cars. "Most than just a venue for sharing information, we are anything just about Subarus, we also aim to foster fun and friendly relationships among members and their families," he added.

Motor Image Philippines GM Nicky Montano said: "We are very happy to see these proud Subaru owners and we believe they best represent what our brand stands for," he enthused.

Details of membership application and club activities can be found at www.subaruclub.ph.

24/7 To be you

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chela Banal-Formoso Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

Remote-control timepieces

Dick Tracy gadgetry? James Bond fiction? Not anymore, not with the new Sony Ericsson MBW-150 Bluetooth watches

By Gilda Cadiz

SAY YOU'RE IN THE MIDdle of Edsa on a hot afternoon, your hands jammed on the steering wheel, the chaos of the road cramming your senses and chiming every bit of your concentration.

Your phone rings. You can't take your hands off the steering wheel, but you need to find out who's calling. So you look at your watch, which displays the name and number of the caller. Turns out it's someone you've been trying to avoid. You reach for your watch and press a key to reject the call.

Or, say you're in one part of your living room while your music phone is plugged into speakers and blasting out your favorite playlist to another corner. You feel bored with the music, but don't want to get off your chair to manually fiddle with the phone.

There's another way. You press some keys on your watch, and voilà, you're browsing through the playlist, changing music tracks and increasing the volume. Your phone has become your remote control.

Dick Tracy gadgetry? James Bond fiction? Some 30 years ago, perhaps, but not anymore. Not with the new Sony Ericsson MBW-150 Bluetooth watches, which are set to debut in Manila within the first quarter of this year.

These watches are designed to offer consumers the breakthrough convenience of controlling their phones from their trusty wristwatch. While Bluetooth has been a standard feature of many mobile brands, Sony Ericsson outlines the convenience in striking new ways by embedding it into timepieces and integrating them with ever more sophisticated functions.

REMOTE CONTROL | C2

Enjoy life in a new form.
WeRoam comes built-in and FREE with Dell notebook PCs

Dell™ VOSTRO™ 1400
PHP 69,999

WeRoam PLUS Features:

WeRoam

Nivea introduces new products in an Amazing Race-themed event

Fun and summer sun

TEAM Nivea Fun Pilot

TEAM Nivea Sun

Text and photos by Blanca Consunji
2003 Correspondent

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WHITE sand beaches and idyllic beaches conjure images of lazy siesta-time looking and sipping cocktails.

But not everyone wants to spend hours basking lazily under the sun. For athletes who make a constant surge of adrenaline, the thought of resting still simply to get a nice golden suntan like—that's what it is—is my new water sports or beachside activities.

However, indulging in all sorts of water sports can be dangerous, especially if done under the sweltering summer sun. For people who are already planning their annual sun-worshipping pilgrimages to beaches around the country, it's time to work up on sun protection for sudden trips out of town, although dermatologists agree that it is best to wear sunscreen everyday.

Nivea recently added three new summer-appropriate products to their line: the Nivea Sun SPF30 Protect Refreshing Fluid, UV30 Whitening Refreshing Fluid, and the Energy Fresh deodorant with Lemongrass.

"We are exposed to the sun in our day-to-day activities," said Ida Bruno, group brand manager of Nivea. "The difference of the Refreshing Fluid sunscreen from our regular sunscreen is that they're ideal for everyday use because they're lighter."

"The Refreshing Fluid is light and moisturizing, non-greasy and, straightening," Dy-soo added. "Our regular have cream is thicker because it's water resistant, which is good when you go swimming or do water sports. Ida wants us to cater to all the consumer needs of our consumers."

The Energy Fresh deodorants contains lemongrass and avocado extracts to help you keep cool and sweat-free during the warmer summer days. "It has no alcohol or colorants, so even those with sensitive skin can use it," Chloe said.

TEAM Nivea Ruby

CELEB! gamely try out the various challenges

AT THE pool

At Pearl Farm

To introduce their latest products to the public, Nivea hosted a three-day Amazing Race-themed event at the Davao Pearl Farm. Guests were ushered to a resort on the beach's canvas tent and body products as they raced around the resort to do various challenges prepared by games master Brad Barrett.

Five teams—Nivea Sun (yellow), Body (orange), Baby (blue), for Men (green) and Visage (pink)—competed for the top prize of 10 Appl

Contestants [illegible] television personality, Bianca Gu Patricia, Maggie Mark Herrera, B Arman Ebuna, [illegible] quite and [illegible] ers. To spice u the Amazing Ra Jessica Lopez, a Kristine Hermo various teams.

The challeng the racers to fi as a group, [illegible] ing. In the ev studied navig [illegible] Iron work tasks [illegible] videos for later r

"The luxury ways, guests [illegible] with," said Rich [illegible] fellows. "That [illegible] to have fun, a doing it for a

E-mail the [illegible] @yahoo.com

Homey massage

Home services have made the massage family-oriented

WHENEVER I GET STRESSED OR overworked, I turn to massage. Massage is not only relaxing, it is considered vital for health as well.

A massage increases blood flow through your body, improving circulation. That means it circulates fresh oxygen to your organs, including the brain.

It also improves muscle and skin tone, and digestion. Therapeutic massage has been known to relieve migraine and muscle tension. You feel so good after a massage that you feel you can do anything.

But most people are conscious about the cost of a massage. In a luxury spa or a hotel, a massage costs P1,000 upward.

But my family has discovered a way to enjoy the relaxing benefits of massage without the prohibitive price. There are now several home service massage outfits that send their staff directly to your home and pick them up later. They are literally just a phone call away. So: need to fight traffic to go to your favorite spa.

The service is quite budget-friendly. At P250 per hour, the service may be offered to the whole family.

The massage outfits are on my speed-dial, and whenever I have a rough day in school, I just dial their numbers and have they come!

I have found the staff to be very friendly, tame and competent. They work according to the client's individual needs. For instance, when my feet are sore from running up and down the stairs in Phys Ed, I ask them for pain reflexology. When I need a rest, I lie on my stomach for a deep, relaxing back massage.

Equipment

When "ordering" a massage at home, all you need is a chair to recline in or a bed.

In spas, however, they often have massage tables or chairs. Chair massages are more common in public spots, airports and malls.

They are convenient if you don't have much time to spare, and the masseuse can concentrate on particular areas in the neck, shoulder and upper body regions where most people store their tension.

Massage tables are bulkier and heavier, with more spare parts such as the head rest, but they allow the "patient" to be completely flat for an all-around massage experience.

At home, massage tables that we use, we keep to portable massage tables folded up when not in use.

Oils

A word about massage oils. Most therapists use oil to massage. I allow only natural oils that come from plants to touch my skin.

Why? The skin is the largest organ of the human body. I want my skin to absorb nourishing vitamins and minerals.

I always read the label of the oils I purchase to make sure they don't have artificial scents, preservatives or colors. These ingredients may make the oil in the bottle smell pretty and appealing, but they are not healthful. They may cause allergic reactions.

There are many vegetable oils to choose from: almond oil, peanut oil, sesame seed oil, even the olive or corn oil in your kitchen.

My favorite oil is local coconut oil, which is affordable, nourishing and has no strong scent. I always choose cold-pressed oil—it is extracted using no heat to damage its natural nutrients.

It is also the most absorbable since heating makes oil molecules more sticky. I never use mineral oil because it is a petroleum derivative. Bound to store not to cause rashes.

Now that that the health benefits of massage to the salary and comfort of our own home is simply a phone call away!

Gili Massage at Home at 7923829 and 8447846; Bari-A-Massage at 7237157.

THE AUTHOR enjoys a relaxing massage at home.

Remote-control timepieces

From page C1

Three variants

The MSB-100 Bluetooth Series, which comes in three variants, has been released in collaboration with Seiko, a globally recognized name in watch technology.

The inside of their pens offers are three models that exemplify elegant contemporary design married to cutting-edge technology. All three variants come with a crunch-resistant mineral crystal glass face with anti-glare coating, and on the surface look like regular watches.

The devil, of course, is in the details. The Executive Edition comes in a professional-looking stainless steel bracelet, while the Classic Edition has a premium leather strap and black face. The Sport Edition is also in black. Our Sport Edition is orange, making it the fashion-looking variant.

A discreet OLED display at the bottom is the only indication of the watches' unique Bluetooth features. When Bluetooth is turned on, the display lights up with icons for specific watch-to-phone functions, plus a digital time display that's fully synchronized with the phone based on the timepiece's Quartz analogue

Tribute to football

THIS SEASON, HANKAMAN IS CALLING all males to experience a taste of its (arch) American heritage through a sport that has become a popular pastime of Brazilian nationals: football.

Visit all Flip-Flops Bonifacio High Street on Feb. 1, 3-9 p.m., to check Hankaman' exclusive collection of merchandise.

Get in on some football action at the Hankaman Wii XBOX.

Tap into your inner Ronaldo and see if you have what it takes to score a goal in the training Challenge and bring home an exclusive gift item from Hankaman.

Be sure to dig into your favorite pair of Hankaman flip-flops when you visit the event to join the raffle and the chance to win Hankaman goodies as well.

Girls are, of course, also welcomed.

Hankaman is available in all Flip-Flops, Go Inc. Downtown Clothing Co., Gat, Jilli Surf Shop, Adamson Surf Spa, Summits, Sequoia, The Zone, Orange Aura and 100 sports. Visit www.hankamanphilippines.com or www.hawaianaphilippines.com.

T-shirts and more at a discount

The problem with the concept of the "perfect T-shirt" is that a single style will not fit get you so far.

For starters, you'll need a fresh one for

MORE than just shirts

JOYCE Jimenez

LIET Abaya gives you a thrilling s ry.

TEAM Nivea Vivaa

MYLENE Dizon

BUBBLES Pesaro

NIVEA endearing team

t party

TAKING a break after rousing arousal

Safe sun, all the time

DON'T IGNORE THE BASIC RULES OF sunscreen! Here's a guide from Nivea to help you maximize your sun protection:

1. The degree of sunburn solution you use is further on sun protection whenever you are.
2. Do your optimal sun protection device check your skin type and be aware of the sun you're exposed to.
3. Make sure your sun protection has both UVA and UVB filters.
4. Avoid intensive midday sun. The sun is at its most harmful from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
5. Apply sun protection at least 15 minutes before sun exposure or skin dry days. Reapply frequently.

CLASSIC Edition

Top-of-mind gadgets

Because Sony Ericsson phones have made their mark as top-of-mind gadgets when it comes to music, the MBW-150 watches take advantage of that primacy by enhancing the music experience of customers through its Bluetooth feature.

With one or two light touches on a watch button, you can view tracks, adjust the volume, change the tune or turn off the music you're listening to, without having to fish the phone out of your bag or pocket.

Similarly, you can manage your calls via the Sony Ericsson timepiece without having to, say, break off that important meeting you're in the middle of. The vibrating ribbon to alert you every time your phone receives a text message. A similar thing happens when the phone rings, but this time, the name or number of the caller is displayed on the OLED screen of the watch, all it takes to ignore the call or a key to mute or reject it still.

The MBW-150 is water-resistant up to 30 meters, and is powered by a rechargeable battery that needs charging for two hours or more before the timepiece can be used. Is charging clip comes free with the package's.

Its Bluetooth functionality remains in effect for up to seven days, while the analogue timekeeping can last for seven days more. A battery status indicator on the OLED display alerts you when you need to recharge the watch.

Compatibility is, at present, limited to Sony Ericsson phones, particularly with the new W910i Walkman phone for the MBW-150 Music Edition, the K850 Cyber-shot phone for the Classic Edition, and the Sony Ericsson P1 for the Executive Edition. (A full list can be viewed at www.sonyericsson.com/mbw-150/compatibility.)

Today, it's music and phone calls. Tomorrow, who knows what other everyday activities might end up being managed, enhanced, combined effortless with a touch or two of your wrist-watch?

This is not Dirk Tracy or future Bond fiction anymore. For now, it's called the Sony Ericsson MBW-150 Bluetooth watch.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph, visit www.gilbo.ca/lit.info

GET a kick out of these new Havaianas.

every day of the week. They can't all look the same; but each one must definitely be as comfortable and fit perfectly as only your favorite shoe would.

That there's also the fact that Tsitsaro can be plain old boring.

So how do you make sure that you don't fall prey to the lackluster options that abound?

For anyone with style sense and humor, head to David & Goliath. There you can count on finding your perfect T-shirt as at least half-a-dozen colors with a smattering of funny quips and quotes.

In addition, Clarks and Dudy's Toes (both accessories) and Playgrounds (both tees or weaponry) all until Feb. 5.

David & Goliath shops are located at Rockwell's High Street, Power Mall, Tiffanie, Robinsons Place Manila and Greenhills 1.

HAVE a statement with David & Goliath.

UP JMA marks 50th year

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines Junior Marketing Association (UP JMA) will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a week of events from Feb. 4 to 9.

The celebration, dubbed "Let the Good Times Roll" will start with the opening of the 20th Gallery on Feb. 4, followed by the University-Wide Forum on Feb. 5, a scavenger hunt on Feb. 6, the Grand Ribbon on Feb. 7, and The Iconic Relevant Event on Feb. 8.

As a culminating activity, JMA will have a grand alumni homecoming on Feb. 9. All JMA alumni are invited to get in touch with the JMA Week 2008 Committee for more details about the activities and other reunions, contact Tuba at 09174097120 or inquire at 09174097928. You may also visit the UP JMA website at http://www.upjma.org.

acer
FOCUS ON IMPACT
DLP
Acer X1140
as low as ₱4,900
Acer P1166E
as low as ₱5,500
Acer P1165
as low as ₱5,900
0% interest

Icy-cool lovin'

LAST WEEK, WE SENT OUT A CALL FOR stories in the CloseUp Loreapalooza Prom Hunt and 2007 Hot and Tell promo. All the stories were sweet and left us hankering for someone to smooch, but this story is particular love is lesser love any-and love can really be, winning for this couple a diamond-studded necklace from CloseUp Crystal Frost and free entree to this year's star-studded CloseUp Loreapalooza Prom Hunt.

A high-flying love story

For readers Melvin and Mika (name chum Quezon City, the icy couldn't have story took them several miles off the ground for a proposal that's definitely one of 2007's humorous! Mika relates their love story below:

"We first met through common friends. We started going out and after six months, we were officially a couple. On my birthday, Dec. 22, Melvin invited me out to celebrate. I wasn't really expecting anything, although I had a feeling that something was going to happen. He was still living in Angeles City then and he took me to Clarkton Clark. He introduced me to the captain who looked at me and said, 'Hey, someone over me.' I didn't really understand what that was about even as we boarded the helicopter.

We saw a bird's eye view of the sights of Pampanga—the top of San Fernando city, casinos, even the roof of SM Pampanga. He kept pointing at things to show me. On our way back, he pointed to something, and I saw it: a big 'Marry me' sentence on the field.

As tears welled up in my eyes, I turned around to face him and he was already holding the ring. A simple 'I'll marry you' was all I could say.

As we got off the helicopter, I saw a lot of people. I thought they were the aviation employees but they were our friends—who were in on it and wrote the message while we were sightseeing!

Some had cameras recording our special moment, while others brought champagne to celebrate. Needless to say, it was a very unforgettable birthday for me."

At the CloseUp Loreapalooza Prom Hunt, you and your home can also get a chance to win a stunning diamond-studded necklace and spend the coolest valentine. Just e-mail your icy-cool kissing photo and your sweetest love stories, along with your names and contact details to love.patrons.ph@gmail.com and wait next week's 24/7 to see if you win. Winners will be contacted by Angelene de Leon of Stratworks for confirmation.

MELVIN and Mika Quiroz win a diamond-studded necklace thanks to their proposal story.

Visit Island Cove Hotel and Leisure Park, a wonderland only 45 minutes south of Manila. Here you can watch your children's faces light up in wonder, or get away from the bustling city for a bit — any time you want! It's definitely a treasure trove of fun-do's for the entire family.

Island Cove

We have winners!

FOR THE PAST MONTH, THE 2007 inbox was swamped with hundreds of e-mails from people who wanted to get their hands on the latest Sony Ericsson Walkman phones. Fortunately, so was the entries from Herschel Yan and Anne Michelle M. Estrada that caught our attention. Herschel wins a Sony Ericsson w660i for his funny essay on commuting, while Anne will take home a w910i for sharing her favorite music memory. To claim your phones, call Maita of Kimlon Public Relations at 4339457 or 9209658.

Herschel Yan:

"Kailangan po ilang 1-meter/m para???" would definitely be one of the numerous cacophonic greetings I consider in my daily travels. As a certified public commuter, I've been on every PUV known to man. More often than not, bad music blares in these indecent in the not-so-distant background.

If there's one song I'd choose as my ultimate road-trip soundtrack, it's none other than "Time Of Your Life" by Green Day and Michael Penn. It's light on the ears, a mix of classic and folk, and gives you the sense that everything will fall into place."

Anne Michelle M. Estrada:

"Every aspiring musician has a vivid recollection of his or her first musical awakening, the moment he or she started to recognize the magic of the creation of music. For me, my favorite music moment was when I first heard 'Every Me Ny The Smashing Pumpkins. The haunting hums of guitars and booming drum cracks filled me with electricity. The sound was quite unlike any other at the time, since it was just the onset of the Seattle sound. I instantly wanted to become a rock star."

INQUIRER Find a career in here!
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JOB Market LIBRE CAREER EXPO 2008
JANUARY 29-31, 2008
TRINOMA ACTIVITY CENTER
Thousands of job openings await you in the country's first and biggest job fair series of the year!
GMA
www.careerexpo.com

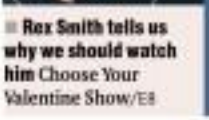
ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

INSIDE

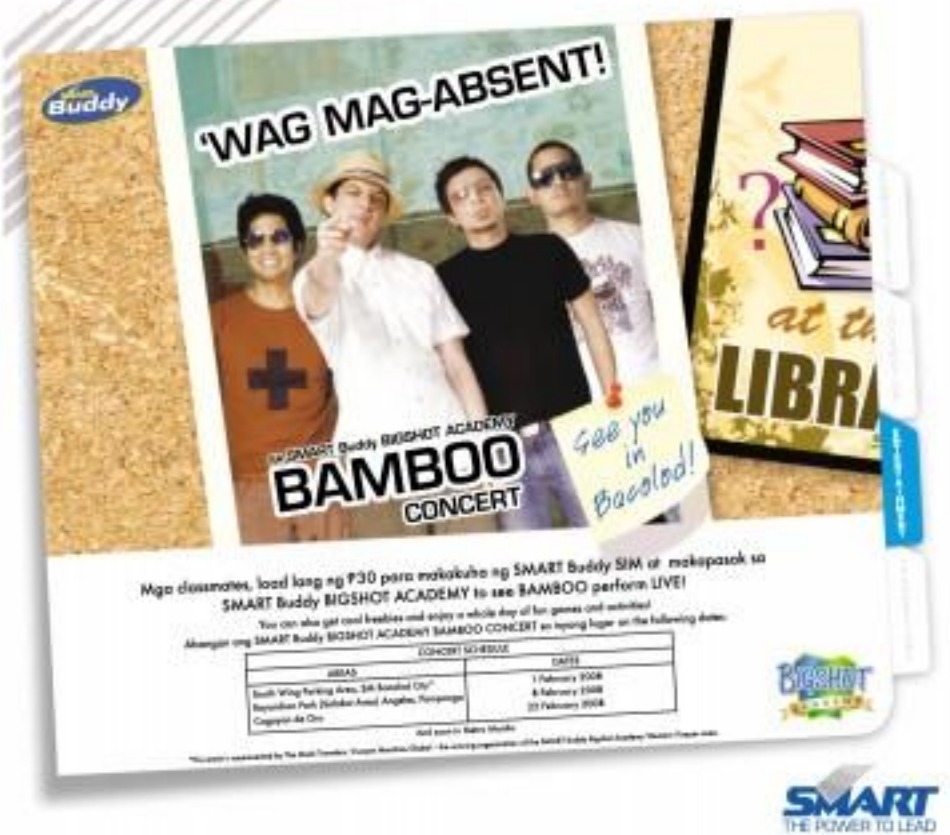
Iceland film stars transvestite from Cebu /D3

Celso Ad Castillo, 'Kid' uninterrupted Yesterday /E5



Rex Smith tells us why we should watch him Choose Your Valentine Show/E8

No need to worry about her–promise Rushes /D4



A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

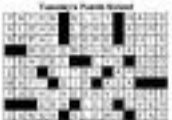
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Nightmare maker
5 Sponsor
9 Adam
14 Gobi
15 Shaman
16 Plant a bomb
17 Pre-owner
18 Post-bar topic
19 Palestinian Cuban refugee
20 Rodent pest
21 Have for breakfast bar?
23 Man-the-helms
24 Hacienda
26 Cleaning cloth
28 Outfit gently
30 Thanksgiving opponents
33 Cafeteria
34 Martial
35 On-site check
37 Fabric softeners
38 Awesome rate
39 Heaven's place
41 Fellow, slangily
42 Payback
43 Kitty litter
44 Numerical ending
46 Loved and favored
48 Money matters
49 Web program
50 Kidney
52 Verses
53 Place to singer always?
56 ___ Mahal
57 Negligent
58 Tattoo artist
61 Sneakers or shoes, plainly?
62 Photo finish
63 Japanese dew
64 Instrumentals
65 Deep respect
66 Interior fen
67 Dressed to

DOWN
1 Angelic
2 Actress Turner
3 Place to wear blue?
4 Tavern
5 Notable rain
6 Bright bride
7 Place to buy a fresh scratch
8 Sweet
9 Cut or Fits
10 Such Nolan
11 Indigo intent
12 Tattoo
13 Sea eagle
21 Swiss dairy
22 Be so kind as to
24 Actress Dahl
25 Writes Dole
27 Don't Cancel Carlsberg partner
29 Electronic head
31 Pose for Vivian Ca?
32 Telescope lenses
36 Downright
38 Alcoholic honey beverages
40 Indian classmate
45 Ancient
46 Study decisively
47 Beginner
48 Sometimes-sweet drink?
51 Grass cover additive?
52 Tennis teasing
53 Earthbound
54 Cigarette smoke
55 Chilean Tide lovers
57 Turkish title
59 Cry of joy
60 Cry of the hooters
62 Headache or nausea

By Phillip J. Anderson

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're intelligent, observant and highly organized. You know what you want and how to get it. You make an effective leader or organizer. You have excellent judgment. You're also highly perceptive; it's important for you to be able to avoid others' bad opinions. You appreciate life and might devote your time to charity. You can direct others' energies, and might be superbossed at times around 1936. Birthdate of: Phil Collins, singer; Christian Bale, actor; Steve Redmond, artist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Lucky 3. Don't be afraid to show your feelings. Your emotions are going over the edge and you're not in control again and again. Today you know this is a problem and things just don't work out. Things are more valuable than ever.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Financial matters and business dealings that were under the gun are now behind you. Success has surpassed realistic goals. You can't be more pleased at a better point. Treat yourself to a night out for you and a friend, and do not accept.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have been close friends with the opposite sex for a long time. Today you realize that you want more than friendship. Is this what you want? Is it romance, and you're confused.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Something that has been delayed or held up, especially regarding financial matters or inheritance, might now be forthcoming. You are confident and in charge.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Old patterns with friends and groups are broken. Old behaviors no longer work. You find yourself changing social behaviors. Feel free.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have been in a state of flux for a while. Today you feel drawn to be with someone who has been through what you have been through. You feel a connection.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Unless relatives are involved, this week's travel plans or anything having to do with education should be put off. Delay other plans. Misunderstandings can result in missed deadlines.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Partners in business or romance are very busy. Don't bring your problems to the table. Just let them do their jobs and solve the problem quickly in the future.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Frustration and difficulties with a close friend or other individuals be alone and solve your problem keep to your life. Simple.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can't expect things to run smoothly when you handle such close affairs. Friends and family members will see you differently. Watch feelings with one another. You're treading water. Health matters don't get caught up in negative behavior.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Consider whether you are allowing your creative talent or imagination to be used for something worthwhile. Don't allow yourself to be taken advantage of by the unscrupulous. Beware. Trust your feelings tonight.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Confusion is about to be cleared up. Intuition and creativity are at their peak, and tensions will exist. But you're working for a purpose now.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	6	9	5				1	3
		4	1	2		6	7	
				8		2		
			6	7	1			
		2				7		
7	3		2				8	
8							6	
	1	5	4				2	
			7	3			9	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	2	7	1	5	4	6	3	9
5	6	1	3	9	2	7	4	8
9	3	4	8	6	7	5	2	1
4	1	2	5	7	6	9	8	3
3	7	5	9	2	8	4	1	6
6	8	9	4	1	3	2	7	5
2	5	8	7	3	9	1	6	4
7	9	6	2	4	1	3	5	8
1	4	3	6	8	5	7	9	2

© 2007 Conceptis Puzzles, Inc. By King Features Syndicate, Inc.

OPENING TODAY

Cloverfield

Mario Klinke (Lively, Jessica Lucas, Lizzy Caplan, Miller Vogel, T.J Miller

Directed by Matt Reeves

A party turns into a disaster, as New York is attacked by a monster that decapitates the Statue of Liberty. Doc Ali of Premiere mag says that "It's dominos to beats on ground-level frustration rather than epic disaster is what separates it from the pack." Tp Boer of Screen Globe opines that it's "almost comforting in its simplicity." John Anderson of Washington Post dismisses it as "a rehash but ... eyeball-bleeding exercise in visual disorientation."

Saw IV

Stars Tobin Bell, Lyriq Bent, Dominic Purcell, Costas Mandylor

Directed by Darren Lynn Bousman

Even though mad man Jigsaw (Bell) is dead, he has left a set-and-torture game in his carefully set up for his death. This time, a cop (Bent) searches for an injured colleague (Mahlberg). Michael Ferraro of Film Threat thinks that it has "more flashbacks than a Vietnam vet on acid." Scott Foundas of LA Weekly comments that it's a "point subtraction for the original." Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly points a spoon above "torture."

27 Dresses

Stars Katherine Heigl, Aaron Marsden, Edward Burns, Malin Akerman

Directed by Anne Fletcher

A perennial bridesmaid (Heigl) wants to be married as her best friends but married male ego gets in the way (Akerman). Chris Tomarowski of 55 Online asserts it's "light, frothy and predictable, but still funny and cute." Mick LaSalle of San Francisco Chronicle complains: "It collapses in slow motion ... unbearable." Peter Howell of Toronto Star agrees: "My best friend's Birthday" screwed the same ground with a lot more verve and humor."

One Missed Call

Stars Shawnyn Sossamon, Edmund Rowan, Ray Wise, Ana Claudia Talancon

Directed by Eric Valette

A remake of the 2003 Japanese horror flick by Takashi Miike, this thriller is set in a US campus where students dropdead after receiving cell phone warnings. Ernest Hardy of Variety dismisses it as a "derivative if derivative never matters." Richard James Havis of The Hollywood Reporter states: "The direction is unexceptional, lifeless." Jeannette Catsoulis of New York Times reasons: "Its connection is the only possible response."

In the Name of the King

Stars Jason Statham, John Rhys-Davies, Ray Liotta, Leelee Sobieski, Claire Forlani

Directed by Uwe Boll

Based on the video game Dungeon Siege, this fantasy flick follows a farmer (Statham) who attempts to rescue his wife (Forlani) from a villainous wizard (Liotta). Jason Anderson of Eye Weekly hails it as an "endearingly bold-faced 'Lord of the Rings' ripoff." Josh Tyler of CinemaBlend.com quips: "At least it tries to mix in a little originality." Image from Adams of Los Angeles Times: "By conviction-less comparisons is merely dull."

Int'l film on struggles of Pinoy transvestites

Four chat mates inspired filmmaker from Iceland

By Marinell H. Cruz

WORKING ON CLAIRE DE Fleur's "The Amazing Truth about Queen Raquela" brought in lead actress Filipino transvestite Raquela Rios, all the way to a fish factory in Iceland.

"She had to learn how to speak Iberian fish. She could not understand what the managers were saying so she kept making mistakes," production manager Beverly Tabada told Inquirer Entertainment.

Raquela is one of four chat mates who inspired De Fleur's architecture, to write a movie on the struggles of Filipino transvestites.

"I met Ok [De Fleur's nickname] in a chat room. He said he was curious about my life. Of his four transvestite chat mates, he said my story was the most interesting," Raquela said.

To make the film even more interesting, Raquela, who lives in Cebu, had to restrain a car accident and a fear touching stories in a hospital there.

There were scenes shot in France, too, Tabada added.

"Queen Raquela," about a transvestite who dreams of escaping the streets of Cebu for a fairy tale life in Paris, will have its world premiere at the Panorama Main Programme section of the Berlin International Film Festival in February.

"The life of transvestites in a Catholic country like ours is not easy. Not all communities have accept them with open arms," said Tabada's "Ineleri, we had difficulty looking for a place to shoot the hospital scenes. Owners of private hospitals were wary when told that this was the story of a ladyboy."

Arleen Carreon, line producer, met De Fleur at the Berlin International Film Festival two years ago. Carreon formed De Fleur's all-Filipino production crew comprised of Tabada, cinematographer Hatch Maddela and production designer Mondo Nip.

Two more actors Olivia Gale-do and Inez Villa play supporting roles.

"Raquela is like any other OF [gays who hope for a better life abroad. The question is: Will a life abroad give her a happy ending?" said Carreon. "While the film is free and witty, it also tells us we're not so different from Raquela and her kind."

FILIPINO transvestite Raquela Rios, left, stars in "The Amazing Truth about Queen Raquela." Above, she leaves the rapid Inarca worker in a fish factory in Iceland.

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

No need to fret about Gretchen-in-trouble stories

By the Inquirer and Inquirer.net Entertainment Staff

BEFORE YOU DEMY GETTING worked up about the brewing crowded on Gretchen Barretto's purported breakup with partner Kuya Lejandro, its true. This could just be because a new TV series is supposedly being cooked. Wait and watch.

An unimpeachable source tells Rushes that Gretchen met with a top intimate executive of ABS-CBN last week.

The source goes as far as saying, "Whenever Gretchen has a new project [whether on the big or small screen], she uses it as leverage [against] her partner."

An associate of the businessman insists that everything was "okay."

Coffeeshop lovers

Handsome Boyfet keeps denying his rumored affair with Gay Manager. But do you know he was spotted in an out-of-the-way coffee shop, which they thought was big enough from the TV set, the fact employs them both. Coffee break?

Brazen model

Female Celebrity honoured her vows to bring groceries to the set of her latest movie and made the wounded to surprise the adoring fans.

"See, I'm head to your company. I hope this will be the start of a long relationship—between you and not only me, but my kid as well," she blurted out.

The ploy had the opposite effect. An ad exec, turned off, huffed, "How brazen!"

Bayer 'big brave'

JOSH Javier REYES

Filmmaker Joel Javier Reyes has signed a three-movie deal with DMV Films and its co-producer Regal.

Is it true that Bayer? movie was spiked by Star Cinema's failure to invite him to the US premiere of "Babal, Sakali, Saklolo"—among other transgressions?

Quite tellingly, he didn't attend the "2007" victory party, held on the same night that his comedy was announced.

Judal bypassed

Is Judy Ann Santos feeling slighted that, for the third year in a row, Star Cinema's not supporting her bid for the Box Office Queen title?

Two years ago, Kimbra Hermosa ("Kimberly Kidnapper 2") clinched the title. Then, Claudine Barretto and Kris Aquino ("Sukob") shared the honor.

This year, Star Cinema is reportedly grooming Bea Alonzo as its Ofelia.

The question remains: Will Bea and John Lloyd Cruz's "One More Chance" make more moolah in the end than Judal and Ryan Agoncillo's "Sukal"?

Will this latest overnight push Judal and Ryan to move to GMA 7, too?

What about Anne?

There are also reports that Vina is pulling out Anne Curtis from MSK-DM.

Is it because she is being considered for the Drama role on GMA 7, title to star with former Bayer Richard Gutierrez on Captain Barbell?

Where does this development leave Marian Rivera, who is also vying for the Vilma superheroine role? Source say, however, that Marian is a lock for the Dyesebel role.

Pozzy mouth

Looks can really be deceiving. This male celebrity looks hotter than fire, smoking supposedly is public.

Turns out, the guy's mouth needs a good washing ... with body wash!

An ex-girlfriend complains that Mr. can be manipulative, and thinks nothing of using emotional blackmail and smug...

ACTRESS Gabi Banchoir arrives at the 14th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles.

AP

GRETCHEN BARRETTO

Overheard at SAG Awards

• "Thank you, guys, for letting me and thank you for taking the hard work of choosing the good values instead of the ones where I really sucked." —Javier Bardem, Best Supporting Actor, thanking his directors, the Coen brothers.

• "If you've seen me on the show with Alec Baldwin, then you know it's sort of like watching Fred Sanford direct with a bar rod and after a while you're like, 'Oh, that bit really is pretty good too.' And you've given an award to the bar rod and I thank you." —Tina Fey, Best Female Actor in a Comedy Series.

AP

• • •

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed TV's golden late weekend. (And why are we moved, if we are moved.)

• Karina Bolin, on being pitted against Jose Mari as writers make impossible cover gift:

"Hindi ko alam. Bata sa akin, wala na akong competition at nabot ng ginagawa ko. Siguro 'yung mga sex-ting ang nagwagi."

• Alfred Vargas, on reports on girlfriend Lyca Gairanod's dueling number-man:

"Di naman ako nadagit kasi dong Arbie ko (ganoon siguro magsalita ko, matalino ka, mabait ka pa, siguro ganoon) dong." (Good answer.)

• Lito Pilo's wish for co-boyfriend Mark Herras:

"Sana magpatuloy maayos ito pero di ako nagsasabi na eto na 'yon. Like ganoon pa rin kami ni Mark. Ayaw ko nga ng ganoon, eh. Ayaw ko ng ganoon. Ayaw ko ng sinasabi na eto na 'yon." (Then do it for yourself, girl.)

• Mark asked for further comment on Lito:

"Ayoko munang kasi ngayon magsalita. Mahirap magpalabas kaka-asawang lang kasi." (Huh? Buti, girl, and don't look back!)

• Jolo Revilla on meeting Love Day:

"Actually, bigla na lang siya dumating. Bigla na lang ... siyempre hindi naman naisip na darating 'yun, bigla na lang dumating. Kumbaga dumating na lang plano siyempre na hindi ka nakakaramdam. Ayaw ko." (Hindi, daglag. Bigla naman 'yan.)

• Love Day, on the courtship:

"Ayoko pang magsalita ng patungo ka'mian. Hindi ko pa alam. Kasi ... siyempre, ayaw ko nga ng ganoon, eh. Ayaw ko ng ganoon. Ayaw ko ng sinasabi na eto na 'yon. Ayaw ko ng ganoon. Ayaw ko ng ganoon. Ayaw ko ng gano

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Brownie G. Valente

SPANISH actor Javier Bardem, Best Supporting Actor winner for "No Country for Old Men." AP

Ledger's body flown to Los Angeles

DID YOU KNOW...

LOS ANGELES—Heath Ledger's body was taken to a celebrity mortuary here where family and friends gathered, according to a media report. In New York, police entrusted they do not plan to question Mary-Kate Olsen, who received a flurry of calls from the woman who found the actor's body. AP

DANIEL Day-Lewis, Best Actor

TILDA Swinton, Best Supporting Actress

Guild picks are Oscar front-runners

LOS ANGELES—DANIEL DAY-Lewis and British veteran Julie Christie underscored their status as Oscars front-runners on Sunday after winning the top prizes at the 14th Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards.

British-born star Day-Lewis was declared Best Actor for his performance as a tyrannical oil prospector in "There Will Be Blood" while Christie earned the Best Actress prize for playing an Alzheimer's sufferer in "Away From Her."

Day-Lewis' and Christie's wins shorten the odds on them claiming the equivalent acting awards at the Oscars, which take place on Feb. 25.

The SAG Awards have been a reliable indicator of likely Oscars success. For the past three years, the Best Actor and Actress winners have gone on to win Academy Awards.

In a moving acceptance speech, Day-Lewis eulogized his friend to Heath Ledger, who died aged 28 in New York last week, saying the Australian actor was someone whose performances inspired him to keep working.

Ledger's legacy

"There are many actors in this room tonight, including my fellow nominees who've given me the sense of regeneration. Heath Ledger gave it to me," he said, to loud applause. Ledger's performance in the 2007 pic cowboy drama "Brokeback Mountain" had been "unique," Day-Lewis said.

"This room in the midst of the end of the film is as moving as anything I've ever seen and I'd like to dedicate this to him," he added.

Christie, 66, meanwhile paid tribute to the cast and crew of her drama about a woman slowly descending into dementia and joked: "If I've forgotten anybody it's just that I'm still in character."

Both Day-Lewis and Christie were golden Globes awards earlier this month for their performances.

The SAG awards took place this year amid a Hollywood writers strike that forced the cancellation of other awards shows, most notably the Golden Globes, after actors vowed to boycott the event in solidarity with writers.

'Unbelievable'

Javier Bardem crammed his stories as an Oscars outcaster after picking up the Best Supporting Actor award for his portrayal of a psychopathic hitman in "No Country for Old Men."

The Spanish star paid tribute to the film's directors, Joel and Ethan Coen, after collecting his prize.

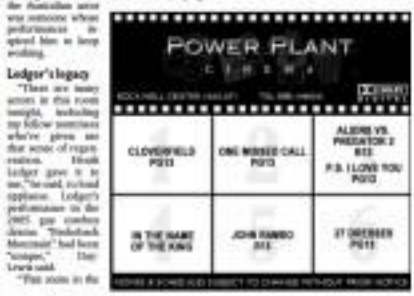
"Thank you for luring me and showing the hard work and dedication to get the good taken instead of the ones whom I really reached," Bardem said.

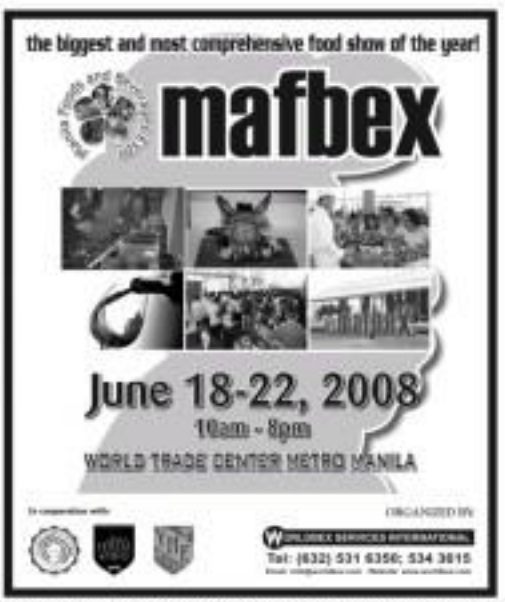
"To receive this is thoroughly unbelievable. I'm a Spanish actor and being welcomed this way from all of you, it's more than I can express in words." "No Country For Old Men," a favorite to dominate at the Oscars after earning eight nominations, also won the award for best ensemble cast.

The Best Supporting Actress race saw a surprise win for 93-year-old Ruby Dee, winning for her performance in the Mafia beats-drywood crime drama "American Gangster." The luxury pre-awards favorite had been Australian icon Cate Blanchett for her portrayal of Bob Dylan in "I'm Not There." Dee was also last week nominated for an Oscar for the role.

The television acting awards were dominated by long-running multi- drama, "The Sopranos." The groundbreaking HBO series snagged awards for Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Ensemble Cast. AFP

[BLUE Christie, above, Best Actress for "Away From Her" in her acceptance speech, she said, "If I've forgotten anyone, it's just that I'm still in character [as an Alzheimer's sufferer]." AFP/VALERIE MACON





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Katherine Heigl in

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4 JOHN RAMBO	4 27 DRESSES

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4 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN	

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STARMILLS

1 CLOVERFIELD	4 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN
2 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2	5 AMERICAN GANGSTER
3 JOHN RAMBO	6 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE

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1 SWEENEY TODD	1 DRAGON WAR
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3 HOOD of HORROR	3 ALIENS vs. PREDATOR 2
4 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN	4 JOHN RAMBO
5 AMERICAN GANGSTER	5 I COULD NEVER BE YOUR WOMAN
6 DRAGON WAR	6 AMERICAN GANGSTER

ILOILO

Filipino filmmakers featured in Rotterdam festival

By Marinel R. Cruz

WITH THE SCOTLAND he is set to make, Adolf Alix Jr. must be the busiest indie filmmaker this year.

The 28-year-old's "Sanduguan," about a boy's closeness of encounter, is done and, will be screened in the Shorts and Young Cinema sections of the 37th International Film Festival Rotterdam in The Netherlands, ongoing till Feb. 3.

Alix is with Jacques already before he left for Rotterdam.

'Daybreak'

He recently finished "Daybreak," starring Coco Martin and Paolo Rivero, in which he is doubling whether to break up or not.

The movie, written by Charlebois Gotera (editor of Dante Mendoza's "Tinarik" and "Foster Child"), will be shown at the UP-Film Center in Diliman on Feb. 13 and 14 and at the Robinsons Galleria Indie-Sine in Mandaluyong City on Feb. 20.

Saluting with Arnel Lirada Jr. "You're holding," Alix said he was impressed with the 43-year-old actress' discipline. He said the inspired him to co-write a film for her with Mak Glandas.

The film is about an old mayor's seven children and grandchildren forget to visit on her birthday. Shooting begins shortly.

In March, Alix is set to work with the Lav-Australian actor Amanda Everingham is a film about a military parenthood in the Spratlys Island.

Everingham's best known for his lead role in the 2004 horror film "Shutter." The film also stars Filipino actor Joem Bascon.

'Manila'

In July Alix starts on the indie-lit "Manila," with Bayo Martin ("Short Film about the Indio Nobleza").

The inflicts in Mumbai Bernal and Lou Brooke, to be shot here and in the US, is written by Ramon Sunico and co-produced by Bicycle Pictures and CJF Films.

Filming of "Sanday," with Iza Calzado in lead actress, is scheduled in the last quarter. Alix said Cinfo Films, which co-produced "Batanes" with Ignito Media, is financing the project.

"It's a historical drama set in the 1930s. The entire film happens inside Iza's kitchen," said Alix.

"Manila" is written by Conzo Salvacion, winner of the 2006 Carlos Palanca Award for screenplay.

Alix said he also has a documentary, "Lola," about residents of the Banana Islands.

Other Pinoys

Aside from Alix, a few Filipino filmmakers will also be featured in this year's Rotterdam IFF.

John Torres' new film, "Ben Nong Ako'y Iwak sa Lalat" will compete in the VPRO Tiger Awards Competition.

"Sambolero," Khavn de la Cruz's "Philippine Blue" and a Korean-Filipino co-production, "Tropical Manila" directed by Lee Sang-woo, will be screened in the Genesis of the Future section.

The Kings and Aces section, which specializes on films that "bear the personal signature of a director," will feature Lav Diaz' 9-hour film, "Death in the Land of Encanto."

Film market

The documentary "Standing Up," to be screened in the Tiger and Tide section, is about young Afghan men training to be soldiers. It is directed by Manila-based Afghan-American Wilma Astrid.

Filipe producer Arlen Cuevas will represent the Philippines in the 2008 Cinemart, a sale-event (and the largest film market).

Producer-director Marge Tengeln is a participant at Rotterdam Lab, a training ground for emerging producers.

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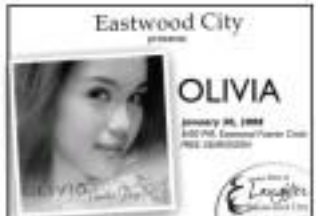

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WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE HIT

Twin viewing treats in the morning

NOW THAT THE SHY VIOLET GAble channel is telecasting on SkyCable 53, the United States' two leading morning programs, NBC's "Today" show (SkyCable 139 and ABC's "Good Morning, America" (on 331 are conveniently available to Filipino cable viewers. Both morning shows are eminently watchable, but which one is the better morning mate?

The "Today" show has been telecasting here longer, and has in fact become a closed-eye-to-me book. On most mornings, we start our viewing day by watching the NBC program, aside from looking in occasionally on a local morning show, to keep an ingot of the latest news.

We've been known to like most of the "Today" show hosts...Katie Couric and her replacement Meredith Vieira, Matt Lauer, Ann Curry and Al Roker...the whole schnoodle.

Roker sometimes turns us off with his idiosyncratic ways and arcane penchants, and some of his colleagues also visibly grimace at them. Otherwise, however, the co-hosts are warm and empathetic in a "family" sort of way, and the viewer is drawn to their fun and easy circle.

Appealing features

The program's features are similarly appealing, running across as a mix of both "hard" and "soft" stories that cover just about anything that's interesting or instructive on the US and world scenes.

We like the fact that the program appears to be particularly interested in health and financial topics. And that it occasionally stages miniconcerts featuring top or up-and-coming musical talents with a project to plug. This is eminently preferable to having a talent just talk about his or her latest production.

Finally, the "Today" show converts with its viewers in a clever way by inviting people to visit its NBC studios. They line up outside the building, toting homemade signs that greet viewers back home. Several times each morning, the program's hosts step outside to interact with the hundreds of "visiting viewers" who show up even in cool, lynchmont weather.

For its part, ABC's "Good Morning, America" has pretty much the same format, and provides similar services to viewers as the "Today" show does. After viewing the Velez Channel's morning show for two weeks, however, we get the feeling that it has less "family" orientation, and is more an commerce in its approach.

Best of both

Perhaps this is due to the fact that its main host is the coach-turned-sportscaster Diane Sawyer. Along with the resolutely acrimonious Robin Roberts, Sawyer briskly goes through the day's news commentary, and with a distinct lack of Ruff and Ready.

The show has seven main anchors, but they never give us much "face time" as Sawyer and Roberts do. On the other hand, the "Today" program's main host is clearly Matt Lauer, so the rare stunts' gender distinctions are clear.

We imagine that this could prompt most female viewers to go for the "GMA" program, but the "Today" show's Meredith and Curry also make for substantial empathy on women's part.

After viewing "GMA" for a couple of weeks, we must say that we're generally enjoyed the experience. So, while we will still watch the "warmer" "Today" show, we'll be switching to "GMA" from time to time, to enjoy the best of both worlds on the morning TV scene, from here on in!

'Romancing the Rat' Feb. 4 on ABC 5

'The Sopranos'

The complete six seasons of HBO's award-winning drama series, "The Sopranos," will be aired starting Feb. 4, 11 p.m. on HBO.

The series is an inside look at the family life of a modern-day mob boss, fret and blasted in New Jersey, it stars Italy Do-nyatic Chianese as Tony Soprano's volatile Uncle Junior, Robert Iler as Tony's blunder-do-something son, Jamie Lynn Sigler as his rebellious 16-year-old daughter and Vincent Pastore, Steven Van Zandt and Tony Sirico.

Focus on The Rat

Drug shot master Joseph Dyer shares the secrets of the planet's resources—fire, earth, air, water, metal and wood—in "Romancing the Rat" on Feb. 4, 8 p.m. on ABC 5.

Clues is an international spy mission who is the Mandarin Oriental Manila's resident feng shui expert. Produced by Solar Entertainment, the Chinese New Year show is hosted by journalists Julia Y. Daza.

'Living Etc'

"Living Etc," a new magazine-style TV series seen on Discovery Travel & Living channel this month.

A guide to contemporary interiors, each episode will take a behind-the-scenes look at how people decorate their homes.

CLICK! This 13-part series begins Jan. 30 and airs 10 to 10:30 p.m. It looks at the world of interior design through a team of presenters as they check out key trends and decorating ideas.

'Incredible Human Machine'

While computers have been taught to "think" and robots to talk, no modern technology can compare to the most versatile machine that has dominated the planet for thousands of years: the human body.

"Incredible Human Machine" offers viewers on an intricate tour, hosted one inside the human body. With computer generated images (CGI) and magnified camera technology, the special unearths the complex functions that enable humans to see, smell, hear, think, move and heal.

The show premieres Jan. 30, with a replay Feb. 4, 3 p.m. Part 2 premieres Feb. 6, 9 p.m. with replays on Feb. 5, 1 a.m. and Feb. 11, 3 p.m.

'The First Emperor'

Discovery Channel showcases the rich history, culture and tradition of the world's largest human population in a 10-day Chinese New Year programming special.

The special episode kicks off with "The First Emperor: The Man Who Made China," which traces the life of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, who united China and dreams of building an empire that would last forever.

The special airs weekdays, 7 p.m., from Feb. 4 to Sat./Feb. 15 to 15.

SHOOTING "Pasakopagsiking Hayop" with Lito Anzures, second left, and Gloria Diaz, center.

HE CAST our actor Alonzo Muhlach in a cameo movie.

AT THE MINT with fellow actors Vilma Santos and Rolly Quizon for "Barrio Quickie."

The Kid, uninterrupted

YESTERDAY

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Roger Crispin
Additional photos courtesy of Celso Ad. Castillo

AS A CHILD, HE HAD the second-row theater comic in downtown Manila on playground; his first "playmates" were King Kong, Sarie Wong and Gene Kelly.

"I could barely understand American slang, but I was mesmerized by the lights and shadows, the framing, the composition, the rhythm, the editing," recalls acclaimed filmmaker Celso Ad. Castillo.

Before young Celso even started school, his father Fernando had taken him to watch Hollywood movies—from MGM musicals to Hal Roach shorts.

"He was a film buff," recounts Dindi Celso, lawyer in The Bill of Philippine Movies. "My aunt and uncles were also very close movies."

Dindi adds, who was also a lawyer, fondly remember and producer for Larry Santiago Productions, a film business to all how young Celso recognizes this business.

Teenaged Celso pursued that he was needs following in his father's footsteps. Downunder had created the classic Jewish heroine "Colenda," immortalized by Gloria Romero in the Sampaguita film version in 1955) and Gina Alajar in the 1980s.

Like father...

"I started out as a boxoffice illustrator," Celso relates. "Studio had of drawing."

He eventually wrote the lyrics novels "Bayani," "Sampiro" and "Bidang Rodio." After all, he notes, stories about Filipino, musicals and vampires were "part of my childhood memories."

He acknowledges that his lyrics sometimes delayed him for illustrating. "I taught me how to visualize the frame." But, Amelia panels were the first story boards for that English Literature graduate. "Dorello also taught me how to shoot commercially viable projects."

From there, Celso, at the tender age of 18, entered core to the movies as assistant. "I started by doing spools of James Bond films. For Chiquito, I wrote Jaime Bautista, Bruce Agnir (32-18, 'Ka Dolphy, Sr. Yes.'

"Of Continental Films took notice because those movies had done very well at the tills.

"VM gave me my first break, 'Mayong Mapanganib' in 1966. It starred Tito Galla, Ruby Regala, and Helen Gamboa in her first starring role," Celso says.

Local movies' rules had seen also a lot modest at the time. "My father allowed me to direct only because I promised to continue my law studies."

Potboilers

He churned out six potboilers, one after the other, among them "Cobra Jungle Girl" with Ruby Regala and "Miramar sa Persia" with Stella Stevens.

He admits that, inevitably both his legal and film endeavors suffered. "I was flunking in school and my first seven movies were half-baked. I had to make a choice."

Celso's gamble yielded his first critical success, "Sampiro," a black-and-white horror film starring Fatima. "I wanted to prove that my films could be artistic if they didn't offend the sensibilities and intelligence of moviegoers," he explains.

The cadre brought about by "Sampiro" allowed him to make "The Virgin," again with Fatima. "It was my first stone-grade movie," he remembers fondly. "Sight percent of the film had no dialogue. The story was told through ballads."

Alas, "The Virgin" wasn't as profitable as "Sampiro." With caution, he says, "It was a big flop. It was ahead of its time. Moviegoers were classical—they couldn't understand why no one was talking!"

The lyric maverick then surprised the industry by plunging head first into the musical scene.

After wrapping "Ang Gangster at ang Bidera" (with Dante Rivero and Hilda Koronel) for Lea Productions, Celso caught the eye of Fernando Poe Jr.

Da King's drink

"In '81, I was directing the King of Philippine movies," he reminisces with pride.

"Bumilbo," his first outing with Da King, was not just a box-office smash; it also won a Famous Best Actor trophy for FPJ in 1982.

"That movie started our collaboration. In a span of two years, we made three more movies: 'Bumbo Dinamigo,' 'Ang Hamon' and 'Endless.'"

Working with Da King, Celso felt obliged to prove his worth because, "You had to earn his respect."

After those four action movies, Celso was itching for another change of pace. "I wanted to go freelance ... to do my kind of movies, innovative and experimental films that are commercial at the same time."

His next gamble, "Ang Mahiwagang Daigdig ni Pedro Penduko," starring Ramon Zamora, hit the jackpot as well.

"I never wanted to be boxed in category. So I followed up the fantasy movie 'Pendukot' with a kung-fu flick, 'Return of the Dragon,' also with Ramon. I also made a zombie film with Alma Moreno entitled 'Ang Babi Ibugo ng Kuba ng Gabi.'"

In 1986, he crafted the horror hit "Patayin Sila si Sindak si Bubuyo," for FPJ's outfit, Susan Roces. They followed it up with "Bulaklak," for which Susan won Famous Best Actress in 1988.

Celso says, "When it was first shown, people didn't know what to make of 'Bulaklak.' But I secretly caught it on cable. I almost cried at the end. It was surreal and grotesque."

By then, Celso had become the master of the unexpected.

After starring sweet Snegajanita star Susan in gentle roles, he re-imagined Miss Universe Gloria Diaz from "Ang Pinakamaganda Hayop sa Balat ng Lupa," in 1975.

Wet look

Celso selectively describes "Hayop" as "the killer" because he started the "wet look trend and straight-handedly demolished the predominantly macho star system."

He remembers that, before "Hayop," female stars were more "adornment" in local movies. "Pang-display. 'Hayop' changed that."

He continued to give prominence to women in his films—most notably "Burlesk Queen," an entry in the 1977 Metro Manila Film Festival.

"That movie created a furor in the film era," he says.

"Furor" is really an understatement.

"Burlesk" swept the awards in that year's MMFF, resulting in a controversy that led to the wholesale return of trophies. In spite of the scandal, "Burlesk" is still regarded by critics as the "quintessential" Filipino film.

"Himuyon si Bendo at Tinio ng mga taksil. Ezzo Benito dated Rolando Tinio to a fight," Celso remembers. "Tinio, who was the head of the jury, bestowed 'Burlesk' as the most honorable Filipino film ... past, present and future."

VS's turnaround

Adding fuel to the fire, "Burlesk" had crowned moviegoers because it unveiled a new Vilma Santos—from ingénue to mature actress.

Vilma says of "Burlesk": "It marked a transition in my career. Working with Celso is a privilege. He's a genius."

With good humor, Vilma recalls a "quarrel" on the set of "Pagputi ng Uwak, Pag-itim ng Tagak," which she produced in 1978. "It took so long to finish. I lost money on that. But we're still friends. 'Burlesk' and 'Pagputi' brought a lot of honor to me."

Gloria Diaz agrees: "Not too many people [would appreciate] his style [of filmmaking]. He's a no-nonsense guy but, I consider myself lucky that I got to work with the best."

As "Burlesk" and "Pasakopagsiking Hayop," so to all his films, Celso challenged his cast to improvise, "not to stick to the script [and] say the lines... from the heart."

Love letter

In the case of "Burlesk," that's because it was, for him, a love letter to his years.

"That was about my adolescence. I was a regular in Clown, Bobby Theater, Grand Opera House. I watched Gaugajim and Bernal Cadenito. I witnessed both the peak and the decline of Bonbibi," he remarks.

If there's a common thread in his 61 movies, he points out, it's that each one seeks to capture an film "a time of transition."

He expounds: "Bulaklak' was about the end of the Bonbibi era; 'Pagputi,' the Hukbalahap movement; 'Ang Manok at Julian Makabayan,' the Philippine revolution."

Contemporarily "Julian Makabayan" signaled Celso's own personal transformation. "In 1980, I attended the Asian Film Festival in Malaysia, where 'Julian' was set entirely to my brief stay there, I discovered Islam. Six years later, I converted to Islam, to control."

Islam, he says, allowed him to "mellow inside" and more expand. Movie is a tough religion. Perfect for the hard-headed."

The serenity that he thus found can be gleaned from his subsequent choice of address: Sindikan, Laguna, location for his major works.

He wants poetic here: "Sindikan was where I was born. That place has everything—mobilidic, mountains, rivers."

Somethings, he spends most of his time in his downtown Jaen digs. As the time of this conversation (just before the season holidays) he is ready in harvest. "I'm always busy with something," he insists.

Lifetime Achievement

Being the recipient of two Lifetime Achievement honors in 2007 (from the Bureau and the Film Academy of the Philippines), Celso thought it was also appropriate to pick up a long-shelved project: His biography, "Celso Ad. the Philippine Movies" by independent filmmaker Ina Bryson.

"Ina was my student in the Celso Ad. Castillo Filmmaking Institute in 1999," he says. Celso played the role of Fpp Quizon's pathetic father in Ina's award-winning Cinemalaya film, "Rosenda," in 2006.

"He's a very professional actor," Ina says of his mentor. "He never meddled in my directing and tolerated focus on his acting."

Ina, however, points out that the Celso book project has evolved into a "documentary."

"The scope is too wide, especially in the context of 1970s Filipino cinema," Ina explains. He finds Celso as a true vanguard of "the indie spirit." "He made movies on films on a shoestring budget."

Coming full circle, Celso is now tinkering with digital technology, with two titles in the works—"Imelda 2" and "OPM."

The technology is new, but venic Celso is rely on the same "improvisational" style he calls his artistic.

"OPM" is for Coco Martin cast in Indie Flat Kid's method: casting. "On the set, we keep improving the dialogue. It's a different experience. Hindi Celso is so cool!"

Proof that Hindi Celso is hip and happening still can very well not in the hurt he's said Mike Bigornia, documentary being remade on both the big and small screens.

After "Nuno Sundalo," his "Bituin sa Sindak si Bubuyo" and "Bridges" have been turned into telenovyas by ABS-CBN 2.

His "Pasakopagsiking Hayop" has also been snapped up by GMA 7.

If you will note, evolving his old movies is the ultimate tribute. As bonus, his 1999 film "Snake Sisters" has been picked up by Bernie Ang Mundo Marabou for DEL distribution abroad.

Dream project

Says critic Fene Tiamko of Mondo Manilow: "I think he's one of the most visually gifted filmmakers to come out of the Philippines. A true original."

Celso is positive, "I'm far from slowing down. I'm more aggressive now. My goal is to make an international movie soon."

That dream project would be "Where Pilibrow Grows," which is set in the Land Down Under and tells the story of a Filipina mail-order bride who becomes the prime suspect in the murder of her Australian husband.

"My wish," he concludes, "is for my films to transcend their ethnic origin and merge with different cultures of the world."

DIRECTING Susan Roces, right, and Beth Manalaysay in "Patayin."

Choose your Valentine show

From page E3

Rickey: "What Matters Most" by Ronny Rickits.

If you were not doing a chore, what would you watch?

Ronny: Norah Jones

Rickey: Lucia, the rock rockstar of Jack Graham!

Why should we watch your show?

Ronny: Because Norah Jones isn't performing here.

Rickey: If you're still in the romancing stage, you get to enjoy a musical show with a lot of humor and great love songs with mesmerizing pa. Then you can get serious, after the show na. If you're with your "permanent" other person, you will get to enjoy as we usually go back reminiscing how romance was when people were still trying to find their significant other.

We usually see couples to look at each other and think if they ended up with the right one. If they're enjoying the same show, then they were probably meant for each other.

Rex Smith

"From Here With Love," Feb. 8 | Casino Filipino Angeles City, Pampanga | Feb. 10 | Casino Filipino Tagaytay City; Feb. 13 (Davao Convention Center, Davao City); Feb. 14 (Cebu Pavilion Interational Hotel); and Feb. 16 (Subic Conservation Center, Subic Bay Freeport Zone). Call 811-0888 or 681-9999.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

Breakfast in bed!

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

Singing in Manila at the Araneta Coliseum in February 2000.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Someone who loves you!

What's your fantasy date?

Sophia Loren

What's the most romantic love song?

"Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

Marvin Gaye (since he's my favorite "Love Singer").

Why should we watch your show?

I put my heart in it, in every song.

Katrina walks out . . .

Ms. Manuel Quinque (president of ONN Marketing) explained further: "Adventurers called to battle-stations and inspirational or to stop hitting each other on the air and just let the courts decide. But even after ABS and GMA agreed, MBS still kept attacking so as of course we have to defend our side. ABS wants a trial by publicity. Sth prefer to do it the legal way."

Break time

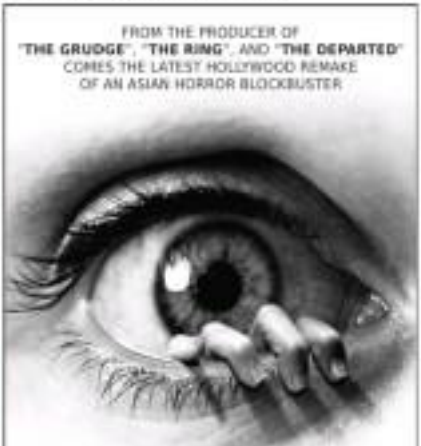
After the actress "carding about carnings" grew over, it was time to unwind at Bobi's outdoor party place, Fires. Thanks from the bottom of my heart and vodka glass to Cedric and Engel Cooking for such a splendid time. My beloved "scrub" Boy Abunda, Boogie twin Ian Bojino and I had a blast with Sonny Thiseran (Philippine Tatler's Rolls correspondent), Zaida Belmonte (The Guardian), renowned designer PJ Arcalaster and his gorgeous male model. Ah.

Personal: No trip to Bobi would be complete without seeing my close cohabiting bitch at the bar seafood team Freska Faith Gonzales & Fruteacake Gonzalla, Kalipsoso and Thrashcated owned by my gorgeous Dona Irene Kamenkey. She has redefined Boogie number with her pure, my dishes.

Bobi happens to be called "The Heart of the Nation" because it's located right at the center of the Philippines. After the successful GMA 7 Boogaloo marathon, it won't be long before the "navel" becomes called "Kapuso."

E-mail answering@abstarget@yahoo.com

FROM THE PRODUCER OF "THE GRUDGE", "THE RING", AND "THE DEPARTED" COMES THE LATEST HOLLYWOOD REMAKE OF AN ASIAN HORROR BLOCKBUSTER



JESSICA ALBA

THE EYE

YOU BLINK. YOU DIE.

FEBRUARY 6

OPENS TODAY

Based on Microsoft's Best-Selling RPG Video Game
Inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings"

IN THE NAME OF THE KING

A DUNGEON SIEGE TALE

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 ONE MISSED CALL	2 CLOVERFIELD	3 IN THE NAME OF THE KING	4 ABSOLUTE POWER
GLORIETTA 4	1 ONE MISSED CALL	2 27 DRESSES	3 IN THE NAME OF THE KING	
	4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS	5 [illegible]	6 CLOVERFIELD	7 SAW 4
GREENBELT 1	1 27 DRESSES	2 CLOVERFIELD		
GREENBELT 3	1 27 DRESSES	2 CLOVERFIELD		
	3 RAMBO 4	4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 2	5 ONE MISSED CALL	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 CLOVERFIELD	2 IN THE NAME OF THE KING		
	3 27 DRESSES	4 SAW 4	5 ONE MISSED CALL	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 CLOVERFIELD	2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS	3 SAW 4	4 [illegible]
MARKET! MARKET!	1 CLOVERFIELD	2 SAW 4		
	3 27 DRESSES	4 IN THE NAME OF THE KING	5 ONE MISSED CALL	
TRINOMA	1 RAMBO 4	2 SAW 4	3 27 DRESSES	4 IN THE NAME OF THE KING
	5 ONE MISSED CALL	6 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 2	7 CLOVERFIELD	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Photocentral Movies, January 28 to February 3

Greenbelt — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

Alabang Town Center — Alvin & The Chipmunks Live at Alabang Town Center, January 26 & 27, 11am, 2pm & 4pm, Activity Center

Ayala Center Cebu — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

Market! Market! — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

Christian's — Repertory Philippines presents Fortissimo's world premiere, January 11 to 27, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 687-47-16 or visit www.repertory.philippines.com

Ayala Museum — EXHIBITS OF SIGNIFICANCE! Paintings by Juan Luna, Fernando Amorsolo, and Fernando Zobel. For more info, pls. call 757-0107 to 21 loc. 30 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Nonna — WELCOME 2008 SALE, January 11 to February 3

Glorietta · Greenbelt · Trinoma · Alabang Town Center · Ayala Center Cebu · Market! Market! · Tri Nonna

"TEEVEE Heroes" hosts John Arcena, left, and Angelito Eng with segment host Marjorie

Katrina walks out on dance number with Marian

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

KATRINA HALILI IS BELIEVED THAT HER reduced relationship with Marian Rivera is slowly healing. "Sa nanood ako nunanong sa para dedication si Marian na kantahin ko," she said. "I reached out to her by giving her written comedy. Then a red cardigan. Di pa naman kami close. Cool lang."

But what's this I heard from a media insider that Katrina cried after her dance showdown with Marian in GGV last Sunday? "Naghalo daw si Kristine pero si Marian okay ang sayaw," my source claimed. "Kaya umiyak si Katrina at nag-walk out. Di ko siya nakausap as case in the E!/U portion."

But my word: not true. With a body like hers, even honey-bear moves won't move a thud.

'Happily married'

I crossed my godbrother Mark Anthony about Michelle Madrigal. Embassy Ladies' habitues insist that they spotted the two being quite cozy as the last.

Wasn't did have to out with Michelle but we just bumped into each other there; it wasn't on purpose," he clarified and added, laughing, "I find her pretty but between us ah, I'm a happily married guy."

Considering all the struggles that Mark and his wife Melissa have endured during his rehab days, he wouldn't be foolish to throw everything away now.

'Kapuso Dinagyang'

I'm a Manila girl by birth but an Ilonggo at heart. That's why when GMA 7 invited me to their "Kapuso Dinagyang" weekend in Iloilo, I dropped everything to go there.

"Dinagyang" means to dance. The Ilonggos danced as the Freedom grandstand as they cer-

ebrated with a mass while enjoying the Kapuso stars' extravaganza.

Katrina Halili, Ehra Madrigal, Dimarie Mangahas and Mark Anthony Fernandez were confined. The crowd curently hammed along when cha-cha-ed Ghih dances were played.

The "Cap of Lava" is surely earning him his years wonder.

Hip mag shaw

Glaiza de Castro will give viewers a generous backstage of the Stooges way of life via "Inside Secret" (Our Style)," which premieres on Feb. 3 (before GGB). Hosted by sought-after model Angelika Ong and fiercy teen Arlene Amore, it will feature the styles, handbooks, delicacies, personalities and best-kept secrets of each-a band.

Ranting about ratings

Since Iloilo is just a forty hour ride-away from Cebu, the ratings wars that simmered from ABS-CBN's allegations against GMA 7 to "found" country inevitably cropped up. Bobo Jumalon, the charming head of Ghih Regional TV, summed it up: "At the rate ABS-CBN is trading accusations at us, it's become a love-hate relationship. Malaki na lang pati pagsasabay kay Manny Aquino (hosting talk-a-ords..."

BETHANY, ET

CHOOSE YOUR *Valentine* SHOW

EVERY YEAR, Inquirer Entertainment helps readers pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists some personal questions as well as what they have in store for audiences. The 2008 series starts today.

JOSE Mari Chan

Jose Mari Chan

"A Heart's Journey," with guest Shanyn Bagis, on Feb. 13 and 14, 8 p.m. at the Music Museum. Call 891-9999 and 721-6720.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

In the past, my wife and I would go out of town and spend the day together. One Valentine's Day, we had dinner with my daughter Lisa and her husband T.J. outside Metro Manila since all restaurants are usually filled to the brim. Another time, I remember having dinner with a couple of good friends at home.

Let me say, however, that as often as we can, we should make each day an extension of Valentine's Day.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you have ever experienced?

After being married 27 years, my wife and I have had many memorable Valentine's days, but the first one that comes to mind is in 1975. We only had one child then and, on a limited budget, we decided to eat up a table by our outdoor garden at home complete with candlelight. A table for two and we had food fondue. That has got to be one of our most memorable Valentine's Day.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Being alone together for a quiet dinner in a place conducive to intimate, private conversation.

Who's your Valentine date?

I think this question is best suited for a younger, unmarried person.

BOBBY Garcia and Danny Javier

What's the most romantic love song?

My three favorite Valentine's songs are "Two For the Road," "Memory To Memory" and "Long Ago and Far Away."

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

Sting and the Police in Macau.

Why should we watch your show?

People who are tired of listening to today's music should come to our show. Since I will be singing mostly my originals, the audience will get to listen to songs they don't hear too much or too often elsewhere.

The APO

Feb. 14, The Bellevue Hotel, North Bridgeway, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang. Call 771-8181.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

Danny Javier: I have a special Valentine dinner with my children at home.

Bobby Garcia: Usually, a cozy dinner in an old favorite place where you had some great times together. A reminiscing place!

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

Danny: It has yet to happen. A full orchestra playing some of my favorite love songs in my smallish garden under the moon with me and my date alone at a table for two.

Bobby: Hmm, it's been too long, can't remember, ha ha ha.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Danny: It's a date that presents itself as one unintercepted but unanticipated flow of simple joys.

Bobby: If half of the time you could do something you've always wanted to do but haven't done yet, then for the other half do something your partner could only wish for but haven't done yet. Gosh, what a birthday day it would be.

Who's your Valentine date?

Danny: Belle Berry.

Bobby: Can't answer that on the grounds that it might incriminate me and gravely affect my current relationship now and forever.

What's the most romantic love song?

Danny: "Moonlight Sonata."

CHADDIE R

"Great romantic entertainment"
FOX NEWS

EVERYONE LOVES
Katherine Heigl in

27 Dresses

PG-13

GRAND OPENING TODAY

BO CARRUDO sings enduring love songs in "Classically Retro," at the Captain's Bar

PHOTOS BY ROSS ROSS

Two faithful crowds come together

ONE DAY THAT SHOULD HAVE A repeat, then another afterwards and yet another, is "Classically Retro," rumored on Jan. 19 at the Captain's Bar of Dit Mandarin Oriental Hotel and featuring the Carruda band Spirit of '67.

Consider the coming together of two faithful crowds, one for each of the two acts that have flourished separately.

Followers of Spirit of '67 turn up at every show, whenever, and they're hard to miss. They get up and dance at the slightest provocation—cue, to pairs, or as the soloist club brought in its feet by rhythms of the 50s through the '90s. It's infectious.

The Bo Carruda circle is no less devoted. He should get a medal for valor, having fearlessly stuck to a repertoire of love songs, a few of them in foreign languages even. The determination has paid off; he has definitely claimed a cliffy deserved niche in the lounge act landscape.

You'd think one's fans would alienate the other's. Wrong. Spirit of '67 enthusiasts assessed very much values such the romantic suite offered by Bo, who took centerstage first. And Bo's own "cohorts among" stayed after his half of the program, to join some, uh, spirited line dancing.

THE LINE Liezel Lucero leads Spirit of '67 to sign 'em on their feet yet again